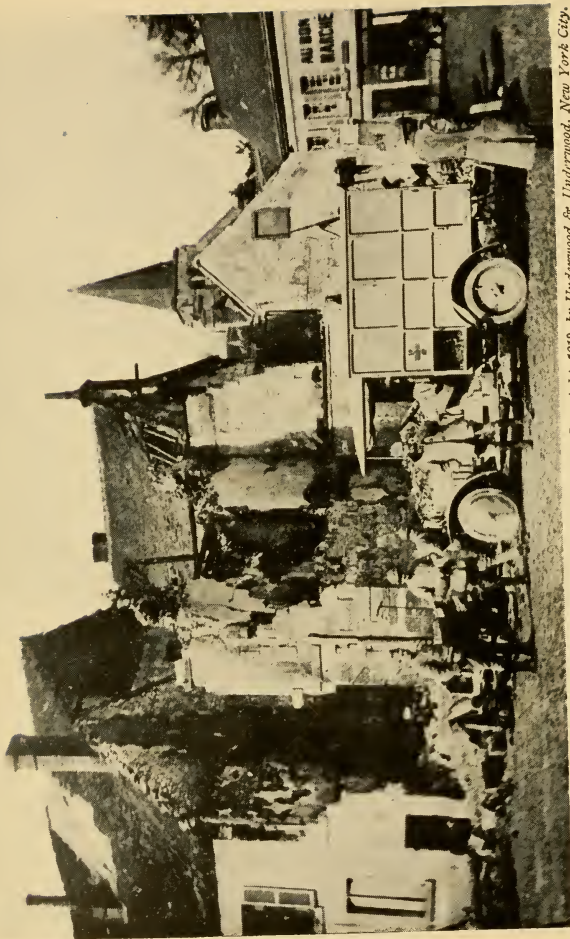






**OLD GLORY AND
VERDUN**



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WHAT REMAINED OF A FRENCH FIELD HOSPITAL AFTER A GERMAN
INCENDIARY SHELL HIT IT.

OLD GLORY AND VERDUN

And Other Stories

BY
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OLD GLORY AND VERDUN

WARD EIGHTY-THREE

IT was my first morning at the hospital. The clock in the *vestiaire* stood at five minutes to eight. At eight I was to begin work. "Report for duty" was the way the formal summons ran. I was to report to Ward Eighty-three, the biggest, the heaviest and the most interesting ward in the hospital. Mrs. Monroe, who had charge of the untrained and unpaid volunteer nurses—or *auxiliaires*, as they are termed—had told me to await her in the *vestiaire*. Accordingly I waited, feeling awkward and strange and timid, like a Freshman on his first day at college.

To say that I was nervous would be considerably understating the case. Ever since entering the stone portal of the big American war hospital that morning, I had been smitten with a deadly ague of fear—fear lest in my abysmal ignorance I should do the wrong thing at the wrong time, or fail to do the right thing at the right time, and a man should die as the

consequence—a man; a real, live, breathing man—one of those gay, muscular, bright-eyed little boy soldiers of France, with cigarettes perched rakishly behind their ears, that I had seen crowding the streets of Paris on their brief *permissions* from the Front!

Suddenly it came to me that fastening a handkerchief round the eyes of a blinking but obliging friend was a vastly different affair from fastening a firm, nonslippable bandage across the sockets of a man whose eyes have been torn out by a ball. And how did one stop a hemorrhage? You tied something somewhere. That was the extent of my knowledge on that point. In the confusion of my mind, I had even forgotten how to rescue a drowning man, a formula which has always fascinated me and which I have memorized at intervals ever since the age of ten, thinking that some day in such a fashion I might rescue my future husband. In short, all the carefully acquired artificial knowledge I had been able to absorb in a three-months' First Aid Course in New York, all the data, the neat lists of questions and answers, had faded clean out of me, like a cheap dye, now that I was faced up with the immediate and grim reality.

That course, and the light-heartedness with which I had pursued it, seemed all at once to me very remote, irrelevant to the present situation, and somehow like a joke in bad taste. I perceived, or I believed I perceived, that I was in a false situation. I

had no business in that *vestiaire*, in that white uniform and coif. If at that moment there had been a train waiting outside the *vestiaire* door bound for the Grand Central Station, I should have taken it without a second's hesitation. There being none, I consoled myself with the reflection that, after all, I had not asked to come; that, on the contrary, I had been sent for and urged to begin without delay, as the hospital was undermanned at this summer-vacation season, and the wounded were pouring in, a great steady stream, from the base hospitals.

Moreover, I should not be alone, like a sentinel on his post. Over me, the *auxiliaire*, was the trained nurse; over the trained nurse was the head nurse; over the head nurse was the doctor of the ward; over the doctor was the assistant surgeon; over the assistant surgeon was the chief surgeon, or *médecin chef*; and over all of us, interlocking us together, was the French military system and the invisible but potent Papa Joffre. So that if I, alone, could not stop a hemorrhage, I could call my trained nurse; if she could not stop it, she could call the head nurse; if the two of them could not stop it, they could call the ward doctor; and if he could not stop it—but at this point I felt myself on safe ground. The affair was out of my hands!

"Have you ever had to stop a hemorrhage?" I voiced my secret fear to a young Englishwoman beside me, who was rapidly changing from her civilian

costume into the crisp white linen *infirmière's* blouse of the wards.

"*Mon Dieu*, no!" She laughed as she pinned on her coif. "Not a chance, with so many nurses round. You'll have plenty of chance, though, to wash their feet—those that still have feet," she added soberly. "Is this your first day?"

I nodded.

"And did you have any training—I mean any real training—before you entered?" I asked.

"No," she said. "I took an examination in London; but the examiner was so weary by the time he got to me that he merely said, 'Have you had the usual course?' And when I replied 'Yes,' he simply passed me through. But it doesn't matter. You soon pick things up. What's your ward?"

"Eighty-three."

She raised her brows at that and glanced at my feet.

"I hope you have comfortable shoes! That ward is the hardest in the hospital—nothing but big primary cases; every single *blessé* in bed. You'll have no chance to go to sleep at the switch," she added with a smile. "If your feet hurt to-night, rub them with cold cream, then alcohol; and lie with them up on the footboard of your bed. It takes the swelling out. Have you read the rules?" She waved her hand toward a printed sheet tacked upon the wall, nodded and hurried off.

I faced round, feeling more than ever like a Freshman on his first day, and read the following:

“AMERICAN AMBULANCE

“CONDITIONS FOR AUXILIARY SERVICE

“The *auxiliaires* work under the trained nurses. They do not, as a rule, attend at operations; nor do they do the dressings, although they might be called upon to do a minor dressing, should the nurse consider them sufficiently experienced. The hours are from eight A. M. to six P. M. daily, with one whole day free one week, and one afternoon free the following week. *Auxiliaires* are asked to stay three months at least; six months if possible. The service is entirely voluntary, and *auxiliaires* must meet all their own expenses. Luncheon is provided at the Ambulance at a cost of 1.50 francs a meal——”

At this juncture the *vestiaire* door opened again. I wheeled—I had been wheeling every time it opened for the last ten minutes!—and Mrs. Monroe’s brisk voice said:

“Ah, there you are! Sorry to have kept you waiting. I’ll just take you to Miss Brooks, the head nurse of Salle Eighty-three, and she’ll tell you where to begin.”

Five minutes later introductions had been effected.

Miss Brooks, who, together with the doctor, two other nurses and an orderly, was bending over a bed from which proceeded loud screams of "*Oh, là là! Oh, là là!! Oh, là là!!! Bon Dieu! Doucement! Oh, là là!*" turned to the nurse beside her and said briefly:

"Here's your auxiliary, Miss Ransome. Is there anything she can start on?"

Miss Ransome did not even glance up. She was holding, firmly grasped in both hands, a man's leg, stiffly extended, while the doctor lifted pieces of gauze from what appeared to be a deep bloody and suppurating crater in the thigh.

"One moment, please," she murmured.

The dressing of the wound continued. The man renewed his high agonized cries: "*Oh, là là! Oh, Nom d'un Nom! Doucement!*—Gently there!"

I stood aside and drew a deep breath. The quality of anguish in those tones had already turned me pale. Later I was to learn to discriminate between sounds of pain. There is the loud outcry of the man who is not in extreme pain, but whose nerves have been so battered by shock, exposure and continued strain that he is no longer master of himself. Second, there is the scream of the man, also suffering from shock and abnormally sensitive, who howls at the mere approach of the doctor.

And finally, there is the cry of the plucky soul, strong to endure, but whose agony has passed the

limit of human endurance. Such a cry, bursting out across the ward, simply stampedes the nerves; heard suddenly in the middle of the night it would fetch one out of bed in a single leap, panic-stricken with horror; and even in a big hospital, where innumerable sounds of pain blunt the ear, it still takes the right of way, momentarily stilling the air. As the days went on I was to learn these fine discriminations; but at present all screams were alike to me. I gave each one full value, one hundred per cent of anguish.

While the dressing proceeded I looked about me. Salle Eighty-three was a spacious airy room, lofty-ceiled, with tessellated stone floors, and long French windows on two sides. One set of windows gave upon the rear of the building, and the other side opened on a charming French garden round which the huge structure is built, one room deep, in the shape of a hollow square. Inside the salle the beds were ranged round the four sides and came halfway down the center, forming thus two passages that were none too wide for the busy morning traffic.

Everyone, I perceived, was already working under a full head of steam. Two doctors were in the ward, one on each side, and the dressings were progressing steadily from bed to bed. A nurse preceded the doctors, cutting down the bandages. The air was thick with cries and groans, the cry of "*Doucement!* Easy there!" prevailing high above all others like a mo-

notonous refrain. French military orderlies were hurrying about, their arms piled high with stained linen; two blowzy-cheeked little *femmes de chambre* were down on their knees scrubbing the stone floor, their tongues and their *sabots* clattering together. Ahead of them a bent old woman, with a great red hooked nose and a wide toothless smile, hideous as one of Shakespere's witches, was passing from bed to bed, gathering up the cigarette butts, chaffing the men and exchanging with them jests as broad as they were good-natured.

It was evident she was a prime favorite, for it was "*Grand'mère!*" "*Grand'mère!*" straight down the line, and chuckles followed in the wake of her sallies like bubbles on a stream. Here and there patients able to sit up in bed had removed their *chemises* and were soaping their chests with gusto. These *Grand'mère* favored with take-offs on their manly beauty. Bursts of laughter punctuated her hits.

"Here are your men," said Miss Ransome, joining me—"these twelve. You're not responsible for the others. Suppose you begin with Claudius there. Wash him. Rub his back with alcohol. Then make his bed. Watch out for his broken leg!" she cautioned.

And she nodded toward that unfortunate member, which, swathed as stiff as that of a mummy and dotted with numerous little rubber tubes that sprouted up through the bandages like unnatural

flowers, was swung out upon an extension and held taut by a jungle of pulleys and bags and weights.

"He's had a hard time," she continued in a lowered voice. "What with losing his eye and getting his leg infected—you see, he lay wounded four days and four nights on the battlefield, without water, before he was finally rescued—he's had a tough pull. For weeks we thought he would die. But he fooled us all—didn't you, Claudius?"

As she spoke English, the boy did not understand. He lay regarding her with a bright dark eye, all the brighter for the black patch which covered its companion; and finally he asked in tones of weary politeness:

"You said, mees?"

"Change all his linen," she pursued unheeding. "He can raise himself an inch or two. When he's finished, go straight down the line and do the same to the others. I can't help you much this morning."

And she hurried away, leaving me with my first task—to wash the back and change the entire bed linen of a man who could not stir more than an inch or two without exquisite pain!

"*Bonjour*," I said by way of commencement. "*Comment ça va?*—How goes it?"

"Bad. Very bad. That imbecile pig of a leg! Not a moment's rest did it give me last night. Cramp, cramp, cramp!" He clenched and unclenched his fist with nervous irritability to indicate the nature

of the pain, while the flare of crimson in his thin cheeks testified to a heightened temperature. "I wish you'd cut it off to-night," he growled, "and stand it over in the corner."

"I will—with my scissors," I promised. "And tomorrow, if it's been good, we'll fasten it back on with safety pins."

"You needn't bother," he grinned.

With many gaspings and painful grimaces he got hold of an overhead hand grip, dug his head deep into the pillow and managed to raise himself until his back described a parabola perhaps two inches above the bed. "Quick! Quick!" he commanded breathlessly. I washed him as best I could. Afterward I glanced up at the chart hanging behind his bed and read there: "Simondon, Claudius. Age, 21. Wounded May 25, 1916. Admitted June 7, 1916." Claudius, aged twenty-one, had already white hairs in his head, and his slight figure was shrunken and yellow and dry, like that of a little old man. At the same time there was about him something unquenchably boyish and debonair, which made one wish to weep.

"Have you ever been in a charge?" I asked, to divert his attention.

"Yes; ten of them. Not interesting! Not interesting at all! You stand there in a trench, water up to your knees, holding your gun and waiting for the order. You are cold, and still you perspire. You tremble with agitation. Maybe you stand thus for

hours. Or you climb over the parapet and run. If the Boches retreat, yes, then it is interesting. If they come on, no, not interesting. Not interesting at all!" And he looked up at me with his sardonic grin. "War," he added, "is the stupidest game that a fellow with wits can play at."

A minute later he confided to me that he was to receive a decoration. He was to receive the Croix de Guerre.

"But that is fine!" I exclaimed.

"Ah, you think so?" jeered Claudius. "It's very fine, without doubt; but as for me, I'd rather have my eye than that pretty little medal hung on my chest. Can I see the world with that little medal? *Zut!* I prefer my eye—thanks."

For the moment his nonchalance completely deceived me. It was not until several days later when I came upon him unobserved, poring over the official notice of his decoration, and caught the look of pride, of emotion in the young face, that I really got the matter straight. Twenty-one is twenty-one the world over, and always hides its loves.

After washing Claudius and rubbing his back with alcohol, I made his bed. In France the bed is a sacred institution and the making of one is not a proper subject for jest. But I am not jesting when I say that the ordinary, casually made American bed, with its opportunities for ventilation and its light loose covers which one may kick joyously down to the foot

in the morning, would fill the average Frenchwoman with amazement and scorn.

A French bed is something in the nature of a cocoon, with a hole in the upper right-hand corner, into which one artfully insinuates oneself at night, and from which one artfully disengages oneself in the morning. All apertures, save the small one at the top, are hermetically sealed—so tightly are the sheets drawn under the mattress, so smoothly are the covers laid on, so exquisitely are the corners mitered. One is all but sewed into bed.

To make such a bed is to produce a work of art, a creation. Thus, Jean and Marie made my bed every morning at the hotel, folding on each layer as close as the successive skins of an onion, while I watched them with respectful admiration. Once, feeling too warm in the middle of the night, I tried to remove a blanket. I struggled until four o'clock the next morning. Next time I am going to send for professional wreckers.

But the making of such a bed is, after all, a comparatively simple affair—for I am not in it! Let us denominate it Class C in order of difficulty. Class B is the making of such a bed with an occupant, but an occupant who can help himself—stir about. Class A is the making of such a bed with an immovable man in it; a man, moreover, attached to a network of apparatus—cords, pulleys, overhead weights and drains, all in such delicate adjustment that to

jar any of them will wrench a cry of torture from the occupant.

To this last class belonged the bed of Claudius. When, after three-quarters of an hour's labor, punctuated by many exclamations of "*Doucement! Doucement!*" I straightened myself, Claudius was rather white and I was perspiring freely. Still, that bed was made—it really should be written *Made!*—and I surveyed it proudly. The lower sheet in particular had been difficult to dispose properly. To me it appeared at least twice too long for the mattress, and in the end I had simply wadded up the extra yards of length and tucked them under the pillows.

It was during this latter operation when Justin, the orderly, came upon me. Justin is a squat, grotesque little old man, with the head of a gargoyle set on powerful Atlas-like shoulders. Being an orderly is his *métier*. He has been one in a French military hospital for twenty years, which is to say that Justin is a very wise man. I believe he could give points to Solomon, for Solomon was not a Frenchman. He regarded my bungling efforts for a moment in silence, and then said in tones of grave reproach:

"Ah, mademoiselle, it is not thus we make a bed in France! Permit me."

Saying which, he stripped the bed bare to the mattress and made it afresh, with the subtle perfection of Jean and Marie. My crumpled undersheet

was drawn taut as a drumhead. Followed in swift succession the drawsheet, the top sheet and the blankets, smooth as rose petals and as firmly fixed.

Where, meantime, was Claudius, with his weak back, his smashed leg and his jungle of apparatus? Not a single cry had escaped him. A glance showed his thin dark face alight with amusement as he watched old Justin teach the strange "mees" how to make a bed with a live Frenchman in it.

"*V'là!*" said Justin, straightening himself. "That's the way we make a bed in France!" And he padded noiselessly off in his battered blue list slippers; it had taken him exactly six minutes by the ward clock.

The next bed, when I turned down the covers, revealed a patient whose linen was saturated and stiff with blood. Another undersheet to manipulate!

"Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" came a faint moan from the pillows.

"Where are you wounded?" I inquired, for this is the first fact a maker of beds must determine.

"Both legs broken below the knees," was the feeble reply.

"Don't stop to do him now," said Miss Ransome, approaching the bed. "He's just been brought in and is going up for operation. You can make his bed while he is away. Look at those feet!" she exclaimed, pointing.

I looked. Beneath the caked and dried blood from his wounds the mud of the Somme was ground into

his skin until it was blackened as if from powder.

"Some of them are worse than that!" said she. "Last week there came in to us a little *poilu*, straight from the first-line trenches of Verdun. How long he had been without a wash even he himself did not know. The doctor gave one long-range sniff and said hastily: 'Send him to the baths!' It seemed, however, that he was not acquainted with baths—at least not in the 'all-together' and in an American bath-tub; for the attendants said that he fought like a wild cat—and when he came back he was crying! He had faced the cannon at Verdun; he had been smashed to pieces by a shell, and had his leg cut off up to his thigh with only a local anæsthetic without flinching; but he wept with fear at sight of an American bath and demanded to be sent back to the trenches!"

The bedmaking went on, somewhat raggedly to be sure, for on those first days I was obsessed by an absurd and fantastic fear that sometime when I pulled away the drawsheet I should pull away also a mangled leg upon it. There was one bed, however, which I grew to enjoy making, and that was the bed of Grandpère—fat, dirty, profane, cross-grained, whimsical old Grandpère. He was notorious in the ward as a grouch. Claudius declared that he had been jilted in love and had had the "black butterflies" ever since. He was what is known as an endless-chain smoker. He lighted one cigarette from the

end of another and kept going the entire day through, with the result that his *chemise* front was always full of little burnt holes and powdered thick with ashes.

Nor was his bed much better. One swept out of it each morning aluminum filings, chunks of bread, apple parings, handkerchiefs, books, nutshells, letters, as well as innumerable little pillows and pads with which Grandpère combated the hated "currents of air" from the open windows. The fact was, he got no peace day or night from a badly infected leg, and sometimes he was hard driven for diversion.

Between him and a certain substitute nurse in the ward there existed a violent and mutual antipathy. She was an excellent nurse professionally, but hard, brusque in manner, and without a single word of French to build a bridge of sympathy between herself and her patients, among whom she was known as the old *mitrailleuse*. Between her and Grandpère was waged a fierce battle each morning over the making of his bed. She lectured him roundly in English for his untidiness, and Grandpère retorted volubly in French, with a vocabulary that would have enchanted a cow-puncher. She was displeased with the state of his *chemises*, and Grandpère was highly displeased with her displeasure.

"What is she saying, the old *mitrailleuse*?" he would whisper to me, his little gray eyes gleaming with mischievous humor. "Why has she always the great anger?"

"She says you smoke too much—that your bed is full of trash."

"But, *mon Dieu*, that is my sole distraction! And what else?"

"She says you burn holes in your *chemise* and that it is always covered with ashes."

"But—my word!—does she know nothing, then, of the laws of Nature—the old Anglaise!—that ashes always tumble downward, not upward; and that fire always burns? Can I make the ashes go upward into the air? I am not God. I am only a Frenchman."

An hour later he would beckon me secretly over to his side, point to a fresh perforation of his *chemise*, a fresh sprinkling of ashes, and whisper gleefully:

"Tell the old *mitrailleuse* to come and sweep me out again!"

He enjoyed the encounters! And as they were, indeed, his sole distraction through weary days, I sometimes humored him.

The dressings, meantime, continued, with their unceasing accompaniment of groans and cries of "*Doucement!*" A young surgeon told me that *douce-ment* was the first French word he acquired; and undeniably it is the word oftenest heard during the dressings period. This does not signify that the patients are, as a rule, given to outcry. On the contrary, these young Frenchmen endure the intensest pain with a kind of smiling white fortitude that brings a furtive tear to the eye.

Let me take, for example, the demeanors of the three whose beds are on a little sleeping porch on the terrace—Claudius, François, Emile. Their being on the terrace carries its own significant hint of special weakness. Of these three, Claudius, when under extreme stress, shuts tightly his one eye, thrusts his knuckles into his mouth and bites them until they bleed. If the pain has shaken him unendurably, when the doctor and the nurses depart he puts a pillow over his face and weeps into it silently.

François, on the other hand, an idyllically handsome aristocratic youth of twenty-one, with a smashed arm and leg, takes an opposite course. He looks his pain squarely in the face as if it were an adversary, with an assumption of nonchalant scorn. Under a particularly painful dressing or probe his eyes grow steely and narrow, while his lips under the little golden brown mustache begin to smile sternly. As the pain increases, that smile becomes more distinct, more contemptuous and challenging. I have a notion that secretly François loves pain for the opportunity it affords him to test the fine unblunted steel of his young courage.

Emile, a Breton lad of twenty-two, with a ball through his lungs, has a different reaction. He hoists himself painfully up in bed, stares out upon the garden with his mystical blue eyes, coughs, winces; and at the end he lays himself down again, gasping, and says gently, "Sank you, mees!" That

is all, a soft "Sank you, mees!" spoken in English to please me! Of those three reactions Emile's is the hardest to bear.

In lively contrast to these is the conduct of Grandpère. Grandpère no longer has any romantic illusions to sustain, no youthful reticences. The first article in his creed is that if you suffer pain you should yell. If it makes you feel better, begin to yell beforehand. And curse! Use all the powers of protest the good God has given you. Accordingly from the first to the last moment of a dressing he lets himself out, so to speak, and the entire ward chuckles over his choice list of epithets.

But, despite the amount of concentrated pain that it holds, the big airy ward is much more a place of laughter than of depression and gloom. When the dressings are finished, and the aftermath of painful throbbing has died down, the natural life and vivacity of fifty Frenchmen reassert themselves. They banter and chaff each other and discuss every discussible or undiscussible subject under the sun. Naturally the present struggle comes in for the lion's share of debate; nor is the feeling concerning it by any means unanimous. In that small bedfast community are ardent imperialists, conservatives, radicals, syndicalists and philosophic anarchists; and each one of them takes a hack at the great conflict from his own angle of vision. Nor have they within them the hate for the German that seems to animate some of the spec-

tators on the side lines. At any rate he is not a monster; in fact, one was forced to believe from their many stories of good will that the average German was really almost human!

"What do you think of the Germans?" a young soldier asked me suddenly one day as I was taking his temperature.

"Their methods, you mean? I thought there were no two opinions on that."

"Very well!" he retorted. "Then you take the French side and I'll take the German side, and we'll discuss the subject. Begin, if you please."

"No; you begin!" I said, rather curious to hear what a wounded Frenchman would have to say in defense of his foe.

He talked for ten minutes, brilliantly, earnestly, caustically, holding the thermometer like a cigarette in one corner of his mouth; and at the end of that time he had proved not indeed that the Germans were right, but that war itself was so intrinsically degrading and hellish—despite what romanticists might say to the contrary of its elevating spiritual effect on the soul—that it exerted a debasing influence on whoever engaged in it, be he German, French, English, Russian or American.

"War is a rotten business for the individual," he wound up soberly. "And don't let them sidetrack you by saying it's the Germans. They're not monsters. It's war itself that's the monster. It's a bad

microbe. A mean little soul it poisons, and a big soul it poisons also. The physical wounds—like this,” he touched his bandaged shoulder—“you can see. The wounds on the soul are invisible. But, believe me, they exist just the same, and are even more ghastly. I know!” And he handed back the thermometer with a smile.

The real word-battles, however, take place between themselves. Sometimes an argument lasts for weeks, and they have a go at it every fine afternoon, wrestling with each other like the conversational experts they are. Sometimes it is only a brief but hot dispute. It was one of the latter that took place about a month after my arrival, between François and Claudius. That particular afternoon a concert was impending. It was to be given in the garden by a crack Belgian military band, and programs had just been handed round.

Claudius looked over his card and I saw his expressive face darken.

“The Marseillaise isn’t down!” he exclaimed. “If they haven’t the courtesy to play the French national air to wounded French soldiers in a French military hospital, I, for one, shall not listen to their old concert. I shall sleep!”

Saying which, he scornfully tossed the program over into the garden and composed himself for slumber. But François, who was feeling gay that day, could not permit such a remark to pass.

"I don't think so highly of that Marseillaise!" he remarked languidly, but with the light of battle in his eyes. "It's not a good song. On the contrary, it's a very bad song."

Claudius' one eye popped wide open. He fairly leaped into the combat.

"What!" he exclaimed, flushing with anger. "You say the Marseillaise is not a good song? You say this is not good?" And, propping himself up on one elbow, his eye still blazing, he chanted the immortal battle cry:

" *Aux armes, citoyens!*
Formez vos bataillons!
Marchons! Marchons!
Qu'un sang impur,
Abreuve nos sillons.'

"*Voilà!*" cried Claudius, his voice shaky with emotion. "You dare to say that is not a good song?"

"Ah, the music's all right," admitted François loftily. "It's the words."

"And what's the matter with the words? Why aren't they good?"

"Why?" said François coolly. "Because they incite to carnage! '*Formez vos bataillons!*' But what for? To kill somebody! No, no; such words are not good."

The irrefutable logic of this, Claudius chose to ignore.

"You are not a true Frenchman," he declared scornfully.

François began to smile—the cold distinct smile of the dressing hour. He glanced round for a weapon. A cup of wine stood on his bedside table. His fingers closed round it.

"Say that again!" he remarked pleasantly.

Claudius' hand had likewise gripped his wineglass. Of the two he was much more passionate. He glared hardily and began:

"You're not a——"

The head nurse appeared opportunely on the threshold.

"François," she said severely, "you know you mustn't drink that wine when you're going up for operation!"

François looked at the nurse, at me, at the wine in his cup, and from thence to Claudius, who by now was grinning broadly.

"I wasn't going to drink it," he observed mildly. "I was going to give it to the *camarade*, there!"

And he proffered it gravely to Claudius, who drank it down with equal politeness; then suddenly both of them tumbled back on their pillows and went off into boyish little yips of laughter under the startled eyes of the nurse. And, to finish off the episode, the Belgian band really played the Marseillaise after all.

The first few weeks I was in the ward we were enlivened each morning by the performance of

Clarice. Clarice was a hen; and every day, at precisely ten o'clock, she laid an egg. It happened in this way: There was a young one-armed soldier, an opera singer before the war, who, for the amusement of his companions, would lie upon his bed and with his voice conjure all the animals of the farmyard into lively existence. The deep growl of the watchdog, the grunting of a pig, the whickering of horses down in the meadow, the lordly crow of the cock, the busy cackling of the hen—he reproduced them all with startling realism. The hen, in particular, he loved to delineate.

The sound would start suddenly under one of the hospital beds—the low Tuck-tuck, tuck-a-tuck! of a hen talking softly to herself as she scratched in the hay.

“Sh! It’s Clarice! She’s going to lay an egg!” somebody would cry; and all the ward held its breath during the operation.

After a period of soft clucking—Tuck-tuck, tuck-tuck, tuck, tuck, tuck, tuck!—which Clarice required to dispose herself suitably and discreetly upon her nest, a profound silence ensued. Clarice was laying her egg! The men lay perfectly still, smiling expectantly, glancing now and again at the clock. The hush was absolute. It was Clarice’s moment.

Presently a loud, triumphant cackle issued forth: Tuck-tuck, tuck-a-tuck, tuck-tuck, tuck-a-tuck! The egg was an accomplished fact. And Clarice, her

proud duty done, flew straight to her lord and master, who added his crow of patronizing approbation. The illusion of the performance was perfect, and little Clarice was a source of great delight to the men, who built round her all sorts of romances.

"That's our little Clarice!" Emile explained to me the first time I heard her. "But she is admirable, that Clarice! She lays an egg each morning; and we give it to a sick *camarade* for his *déjeuner*!"

By the time the beds are made, clean bandages adjusted, vacant beds disinfected, the individual tables scrubbed and hot drinks fetched from the diet kitchen, the day is well under way. The dressings, meantime, proceed steadily down the ward. Sometimes, after a new offensive, when the big war hospital has received a fresh influx of the wounded, every bed contains a battered wreck, these dressings fill the entire morning and continue straight through the afternoon.

Those are trying days for heart and head and feet. Through all the hours the busy stream of traffic flows constantly through this, the heaviest ward. There are men going up to operations on stretchers; men coming down from operations, unconscious, on stretchers; men being discharged, with their meager little sack of possessions, also on stretchers. Good-bys are shouted—"Bon voyage!" "All aboard!" "En voiture!" Or the orderly enters with a batch of letters—letters from home.

"Simondon!" he bawls cheerily.

"Present!"

"Girod!"

"Present!"

"Coussin!"

"Discharged!" a voice volunteers.

"Morel! . . . Morel! . . . Morel?"

"Give me that letter," says the head nurse quietly, for Morel cannot receive it; Morel is dead.

At about half past ten, when the ward is in fair order, and the *blessés* under their fresh linen look like rows of good children in bed, the *médecin chef*, or chief surgeon, makes his rounds. As he approaches a bed its occupant salutes, and then listens with intense concentration to the strange English jargon of the ward doctor, who is making his daily report. Perhaps he catches the word "operation"—which every soldier knows. After the surgeon has passed he beckons and whispers eagerly:

"What did he say? What did the *médecin chef* say? Operation?"

I nod. "Only a little one. But no lunch to-day. No good *pinard*!"

Pinard is the trench slang for wine, corresponding to the English "booze." That word, upon my lips, will nearly always bring a laugh from a *poilu*. But no laugh greets me this time. He sinks back upon his pillow, a little white and very quiet. The day has suddenly lost its color for him.

After the great *médecin chef*—or God, as he is irreverently termed in the ward—has departed, with his halo of dread, *déjeuner* is the next important feature of the day. Serving a community of fifty a three-course meal—soup, meat and vegetables, and dessert—is a man-size proposition. Serving it on bed tables, often cutting up the food and feeding the armless patients, further complicates the task. The first day I completely lost my head. My clamorous young brood, nine of whom were under twenty-two, reminded me of nothing so much as a nestful of yawp-ing baby robins waiting to be fed.

It was: “Look out for my leg, mees!” “More bread, mees!” “My *serviette*, mees!” “Have you forgotten me, mees?” “My God, my soup’s tipped into my bed! I’m afloat, mees!” And all in a rapid bubble of French that made my head spin. At last, in sheer desperation, I addressed them in the American language: “You darned kids—shut up!” As was usual in those first days, it was old Justin who came to my aid and disentangled me.

The patients’ *déjeuner* over, the *auxiliaires* have three-quarters of an hour off for their own, which they may get at the hospital or at some of the neighboring *pâtisseries*. As for me, that first day I choked down a few mouthfuls and then retired to the *vestiaire* to rest my feet.

The afternoon was cut off the same piece of cloth as the morning—more beds, more dressings, more

bandages, more high shrill cries, more gayety and laughter. But about four o'clock in the afternoon something began to happen. It began to happen in bed Number Ten. Its occupant, a handsome dark lad of eighteen, had a gangrenous arm, the sight of which, with its deep gashes to let out the poison, turned one faint with horror. All the morning, at intervals, I had held a basin while he retched, or fetched hot-water bottles.

About four o'clock he began to babble of his mother, his brothers and sisters, and his home in the country. He laughed, chatted, cried out "*Maman!*" repeatedly, and tried to rise to go to her. Presently it was found necessary to strap his supple, strong young body to the mattress. At the time I had not the faintest notion that he was already in the ante-chamber of death, so alive he was, so palpitant with restless energy.

Suddenly he lay still. I had turned to get another hot-water bottle. "Never mind!" said the nurse, and at some quality in her voice I paused, startled, and looked again. He was gone. His passing had been as light and unpretentious as a breath of air through the open window.

After he was carried out I disinfected his bed and made it afresh, in a strange convulsion of soul. Thus I had my first glimpse of that vast, interminable procession which must haunt the dreams of ambitious kings.

As yet, I have been to no battlefronts. I have letters, to be sure, which if presented in the proper quarters, I am told, would result in personally conducted trips to lines not engaged in an actual offensive. But those letters still lie, unsent, in my trunk. I may use them some day. But at present there is within me a reluctance to visiting ruins and battlefields. Perhaps it is because I have seen so many ruins who have returned from those battlefields.

Moreover, I have already been to the Front and I have made a charge. It was a hand-grenade charge, under the leadership of one Sergeant Girod, who since then has been awarded the Croix de Guerre. The announcement of the award reads, "For conspicuous bravery in leading a brilliant hand-grenade attack against the enemy while under fire from our own *mitrailleuses*." I know it was a brilliant attack, for I made it with him. It happened in this way:

It was six o'clock in the evening, and the big *salle*, with its forest of overhead apparatus, was wrapped in warm darkness, through which the bright, glowing ends of cigarettes bloomed like tiny stars. The electricity was out of order and the sole lights—two tall candles on the head nurse's desk in the middle of the room, with their straight still flames—lent an air of enchantment to the place. The men, their suppers over, lay smoking tranquilly, or chatted in undertones. To me it was the pleasantest hour of the day. I had lingered to make up another bed, the

occupant for which, a fresh arrival, had not yet come down from the operating room.

"Can you stay a few minutes?" called the head nurse as she hurried past me. "I am called away; the nurses are down at first supper, and someone should be here when your man arrives."

I promised to remain. A few minutes later the big double doors were flung open and a dark jumbled mass appeared. The same instant a loud shout shattered the quiet gloom:

"En avant, mes enfants! Vive la France! En avant! Toujours en avant! Ils approchent! Les Boches! Les infidels! Les brigands! Ils approchent à gauche! Regardez à gauche! A gauche!—They're approaching on the left! Look out on the left—En avant, mes enfants! Toujours en avant!"

It was a shout that would send a thrill along a dead man's spine. A ripple of laughter went round the room. Raised heads peered eagerly. The *brancardiers* came forward, two wheeling the stretcher and two more holding down the occupant, who was struggling convulsively to raise himself and shouting hoarse commands in a voice that could be heard a block away.

"Where does he go, mees?" came Justin's steady tones.

"Here—Bed Eight."

"En avant! En avant, mes enfants! Regardez à gauche! A gauche! Ils approchent à gauche! Les

Boches, ils approchent!" The hoarse shouts did not cease for an instant.

"He's leading a charge," said Justin, grimly pleased, as they paused beside me. "Hand grenades! He's a terrible fellow. He killed ten Boches coming down the stairs!"

Then, all together, with a "*Un, deux, trois—Allez!*" the four lifted him from the stretcher into bed.

He was a powerfully built man, fair, with blue eyes and a blond mustache, and his *chemise*, torn away in the struggle, revealed a torso that gleamed like ivory. Suddenly he looked up and gripped me with a hand of iron.

"*Criez avec moi: 'Vive la France!'*"

"*Vive la France!*" I repeated in a low voice, to soothe him.

"Louder! Shout louder: "*Vive la France!*"

"*Vive la France!*" I said more loudly. "Lie still now. It's over. The attack is finished."

"And the Boches?" he queried eagerly. "They are gone?"

"All gone."

"No, no!" he cried violently, trying to rise. "They're not gone! They're still coming on! My God, see them! Wave on wave! *Regardez à gauche, mes enfants! Les Boches! Les brigands!* Ah, my poor comrades!" he murmured. "See them fall!" He turned to me, whom evidently he took for one of his

grenadiers: "Citronne went down just then. Did you see him? Was he killed?"

"No; only wounded. Be quiet now. It's done."

"But not well done," he retorted impatiently. "We hadn't enough balls. To-night we attack again. Listen well!"

And then he gave me my orders. It appeared that on each side of us were Moroccan troops who were to follow our attack with a charge. For a few minutes Girod was silent. Suddenly he broke out:

"Boom! *Soisante-quinze!*"—the French seventy-fives. "Boom! *Les canons!*" He appeared to be listening to the bombardment. Presently he sighed. "Ah, my poor wife! My poor Cécilie! You know, I have a wife and three children—two boys and a girl."

It was evident to me that the sergeant had a presentiment that he was going to fall in the attack. After a long silence his voice came to me abruptly out of the dark:

"What time is it?"

I named the hour.

"Well, then, my friend, we have still ten minutes. Let us smoke a cigarette before we part." A second later he was shouting at the top of his powerful voice:

"*En avant, mes enfants! Ils approchent! Les Boches! Regardez à gauche! A gauche!*"

Over and over he issued his commands to his grenadiers; over and over he shouted his warning cry, call-

ing frantically for bombs that were not forthcoming; and always he was driven back, despairing, by the tide of Germans on his left. His brain, like a talking-machine record, had recorded faithfully every detail of that last wild, brilliant attack, terminating so disastrously because of the shortage of balls; and in his delirium he played that one record ceaselessly, with no thought, action or sensation omitted. But as the hours went by the record played slowly and more slowly, with gaps of silence in between. Finally he slept.

There is another chapter to add to this episode concerning Girod. It happened some three weeks later. And as this is not fiction, but a plain reporting of facts, I hasten to add that Girod did not die.

Passing his bed, however, one afternoon, I laid my hand casually on the iron bed-frame. It was trembling. The entire bed was vibrating steadily, gently, as if to the oscillation of some remote earthquake. Astonished, I looked at Girod. And Girod was trembling too. It was he who caused the tremor of the bed. Beneath the white coverlet his big body shook with a ceaseless, mysterious agitation.

"What is the matter?" I cried. "Why are you trembling like that?"

He gave a faint, apologetic smile.

"I'm afraid!" he said simply. "I'm afraid of that operation this afternoon."

"But it's nothing," I assured him—"really nothing

at all. Only a slight incision in the shoulder."

"I know. But—I'm afraid! You see——" He broke off, knitting his brows. "It was not always thus. Once I did not know what fear was—before—— That's why they made me leader of the bombing squad. I was reckless. But now—I'm afraid. I'm afraid of that little operation!"

"You've been under a strain," I said.

I recalled Girod's history. He had narrated it to me one rainy afternoon. From his wife, Cécilie, and his three children, he had not heard a word since the war opened, as they lived in the invaded territory. For the last six weeks before he was wounded he and his comrades had been in the first-line trenches, unrelieved, without food save for their reserve stores; and without water, unless one crawled on one's belly at night to a spring in the dangerous strip of No Man's Land between them and the enemy's trenches.

Each night he crawled to the spring, filled his canteen and crawled back to his wounded companions. And then came one night when the spring failed.

"I crawled out there, as usual," Girod related, "and found it full of cadavers!"

"And after that?" I persisted.

But Girod made no reply.

"It's the strain, the heavy strain," I said again.

A nurse—the one known as the *mitrailleuse*—at that instant passed his bed.

"What's the matter with him?" she demanded brusquely. "What's he shaking for?"

"The operation," I said. "He fears it. It's the strain he's been under so long——"

"Pooh!" she broke out impatiently. "Some of these men can't stand pain any better than a baby!"

As the days and the weeks go by the ward changes. Men recover or die, or are discharged to convalescent hospitals; and fresh wrecks appear in their places, sleep in their beds, and smile up to one from the pillow. The big *salle* is an antechamber, with exits leading both ways—out into the great adventure of life and out into the still greater adventure of death. At the end of three months scarcely a single familiar face remains. But the exit leading back into life is always open. The recovered men return.

An aviator, whose leg had been amputated at the hospital, comes to announce that he is to have the honor of returning to the Front. He is the last of his class of eight—and he must fly with a wooden leg.

Even Claudius has been discharged. He has gone home to his mother and sister, of whom he is the sole support. A letter from him lies before me.

"My leg is no good," he writes, "and I never shall be able to use it to work. What shall I do? I shall have to ride that leg all day in a carriage! But where am I to get the carriage? I shall go to America! Do you think some rich—and pretty—

young American mees would marry me and let me ride in her carriage?"

That, indeed, would be a solution for Claudius! And I am making his modest wants known, with the hopes that some pretty—and rich—young American "mees" may wish to take a flyer on a young Frenchman, considerably smashed but with his sense of humor intact. If she should, and can guarantee the carriage, I will send her Claudius' address.

WITH THE FRENCH WOUNDED

Every hour wounds;
The last one kills.

Old French Couplet on the Clock Tower of the American Ambulance, at Neuilly.

WHEN, one morning in Paris, I received orders to report without delay to the big American war hospital in Neuilly, and begin work there as a volunteer nurse's aid, I suddenly found myself reluctant, even rebellious; though it was precisely for that reason, and no other, that I had come to France. But I had just arrived in Paris and already that city of enchantments had cast its spell on me. I did not want to work—I never want to work. I wanted, I scarcely knew what: to taste Paris again; to breathe her air, which affects one like a mild champagne; to stroll about and enjoy her noble proportions and beautiful distances. I did not wish to be swallowed up immediately by another piece of work, no matter how fine or inspiring.

There were a few special, little, no-account personal things I wished to do first; I wanted to revisit

the tomb of Napoleon and ask the little old gentleman reposing down there below what he thought of the present situation; I wanted to renew acquaintance with Rodin's statue, *The Thinker*, in front of the Panthéon, to see whether it cast as big a shadow as ever; I wanted to wander through the leafy alleys of the Luxembourg Garden, decorated with marble gods and goddesses and given over to the naïve delights of student lovers; I wanted to stroll once more up the Champs-Élysées in the twilight and see the Arc de Triomphe, gravely beautiful, looming solidly against the sky; I wanted to view again the statue of Jeanne d'Arc; I wanted to taste once more some Vouvray and see whether the world would turn into an enchanted bubble again; I wanted to discover whether the same immemorial fishermen were still fishing on the banks of the Seine—for dead cats, Mark Twain declared. These are but seven samples of the things I wanted to do. In brief, I wanted to loaf.

"But you can't!" said the crisp English nurse executive at the hospital, to whom I confided these noble ambitions. "In the first place, we need you. In the second place, we've got to have you. And in the third place, Paris just now is no place for loafers. With this present offensive on and so many of our staff completely worn out—do you know there are women working here who have not had a day off in twenty months?—we need every pair of hands that are available. Now, when can you come? Monday?"

This was Wednesday, and there was a nurse's outfit to buy, matriculation papers to procure at the Préfecture, and other odds and ends of official red tape to tie, which would take every hour of my time. But I was conquered. I acquiesced. My hopes of a holiday went a-glimmering. Hereafter, what I see of Paris in wartime will be hasty glimpses, caught on the fly; for it will be dark when I rise, at six-thirty, button myself into my *infirmière's* blouse, swallow my morning draft of chicory *au lait*, whose sole virtue is that it is so hot it scalds me all the way down; and it is dark again when in the evening, at six-thirty, the day's work done, I bundle into the Red Cross omnibus, which takes the auxiliary workers back to the Subway.

During the first week in the hospital the sheer physical strain was terrific. It seemed as if I were in a strange, mad, nightmare world, where everything was reversed; instead of health—disease, and mangled and torn bodies and suppurating wounds, some of them hideously green and yellow, like decayed meat; and smashed wrecks of men, with arms and legs swung up on apparatus that resembled nothing so much as the old torture racks of the Inquisition; as if shrieks and cries and groans and smells were the natural and normal order of things. For days I was nauseated. The sight of raw mangled flesh, the blood-saturated linen, the stench of gangrenous wounds, the nervous strain of bandaging

freshly amputated stumps, and the screams of the dressing hour simply bombarded the unaccustomed senses and hit the newcomer fairly in the pit of the stomach. When I confessed this to the ward surgeon he laughed.

"That's nothing—the rebellion of healthy nature against disease. When I was at the Front, at the commencement of the war, at one of the base hospitals, I used to retire and gag at regular intervals. It was awful, for we had nothing to work with. But mobilize your emotions. Don't let them mobilize you. Imitate the sang-froid of the *poilu*. Yesterday I stopped by the bed of a youngster who's had a leg off and is dying of gangrene. 'Well, how goes it?' I asked him. '*Ca va. Ca va mieux.*'—It goes. It goes better, he replied simply. And he was dead up to his waist already! He was a dead man he knew it, and he knew that I knew that he knew it; and still he looked me straight in the eye and said 'It goes. It goes better!' There's mobilization of spirit for you!"

Nevertheless, when the dressings were over I breathed relief. Never did I learn to control my nerves completely; to listen without a tremor to the cries of pain, the high, piercing screams, "*Oh, là, là!*" "*Ah, Nom de Dieu!*" "*Ah, doucement, docteur!* Easy there!" "*Oh, bon Dieu, how I suffer!*" The quality of pure agony in those broken cries was too much for me.

It was on trying occasions like these that Justin, the old French orderly, came to my aid, showing me exactly how to hold a broken leg; how to wind a difficult bandage with comfort and security; how to lift a heavy patient without injury to myself or to him.

Justin deserves a separate paragraph all to himself, a separate little niche in heaven. Kipling's celebrated Gunga Din had nothing on him—for Gunga Din had no sense, only goodness; while Justin is a Frenchman, with all a Frenchman's natural intelligence and sardonic humor. He had been an orderly in a French military hospital for twenty years; and what he did not know about sick humanity—their weakness and irritability, their heroisms and long, long patience—was not worth knowing. From morning to night he went trotting noiselessly about the ward in his old blue list slippers; dirty aproned; squat, ugly and strong as a gorilla; vulgar, gay, resolute and as tender-fingered as a woman. And the men leaned on him as on an elder brother.

All day long it was: "Justin, a basin—quick!" "Justin, lift me up!" "Justin, this plaster cast is killing me!" "Ah, Justin, how I suffer!"

And Justin's steady, cheerful voice would reply: "I come, *mon enfant*." "There, *mon petit*!" "That goes better, *mon petit brave, eh?*"

Once only did I see him in a passion. Some negligent person had bound a damp bandage too tightly

about a fractured leg; drying, it contracted still further; the result was acute torture. The soldier, a modest, shy lad, had appealed once or twice to a passing nurse; but the first big morning rush of dressings was on and no one heeded him. Minutes passed. The pain increased. Silently he began to weep. It was old Justin trotting past with a pail of soiled dressings who first noted the writhing young figure and caught a faint groan. He paused long enough to inquire: "What's the matter, *petit?*"

The soldier indicated his leg. The orderly's face darkened as he looked. He set down the pail, undid the bandage and rewound it properly, muttering angrily between his teeth the while. Presently a nurse bore down upon them. She was the one whom the men had nicknamed the old *mitrailleuse*—for reasons obvious. Competent enough technically, she had neither tenderness nor humanity nor gay spirits to commend her services to the men. She was like a soured, fibrous old schoolmistress, and the soldiers detested her cordially and, after the fashion of mischievous school-children, amused themselves by devising fresh nicknames for her each day.

Frenchmen love charm in a woman, and hate the reverse like a deformity. Accordingly, when she paused belligerently at the bedside, both Justin and the lad instinctively stiffened themselves.

"What are you doing, Justin?" she cried sharply. "Let that bandage alone!"

For an orderly to dare to rewrap a certificated nurse's bandage is, of course, a breach of etiquette. It is a situation that requires tact; but Justin at that moment was far too angry for tact. Stolidly he continued his task. When the last safety pin was refastened he straightened himself and faced the nurse squarely.

"Some imbecile, some *cochon* of an *infirmière*," he began, mentioning no names, "put a wet bandage on the leg of that poor child!" And then he continued suavely, in French—of which the nurse understood nothing beyond a few scattering words: "Ancient female camel! Daughter of the union of a cannon ball and a hippopotamus: Do you conceive that I, a Frenchman and a soldier, shall not do what is good for these, my little children? *Nom de Dieu! Nom de Dieu!*" And with a shrug of contempt he gathered up his slops and trotted away.

It was not long after this late one afternoon, when Justin beckoned me with a stealthy finger. By this time we had become firm allies. At noon I saved him a cup of wine from the men's lunch and let him rest his aching feet and smoke a cigarette undisturbed behind a screen. And in return Justin taught me all the fine subtleties of his art.

"You are very amiable, mees," he began now in a carefully lowered voice. "Will you help me?"

"What is it?" I asked; for by his conspirator air and his secrecy I knew he intended to achieve some-

thing, by his own initiative, which was against the rules.

"It's Simondon, out on the *terrasse*," he murmured, still in guarded tones. "His new cast hurts him. Last night he did not sleep for pain, and to-day the *pauvre petit* has a temperature of thirty-nine. I'm going to take off that plaster and rewad it!"

"But why don't you ask the nurse? It's her job, really. You and I have no right to touch that cast without permission."

"Simondon won't let her come near. He's crazy with the pain. They've decided to wait for the doctor. But the doctor is up in the operating room, and the Sacred Virgin alone knows when he will return." He led the way to the terrace, a sleeping porch which gave on the garden.

I knew this Simondon. He had lost an eye and had a badly infected leg, due to four days and four nights spent on the field of battle, without food or water, before help came. As a consequence, of the five months spent in the hospital each separate hour had been a desperately fought struggle, a superb resistance of the spirit.

Small wonder that, after all these long months, the cool nerve that rarely deserts a Frenchman had worn down to rather a fine thread!

Upon the terrace we found him, a dark, painfully emaciated lad of twenty-one, his black hair already plentifully sprinkled with white from the hardships

he had undergone. His cheeks were scarlet with fever, and in his torture he had bitten his lips until they were covered with a thin, bloody froth.

"No, no! You shan't touch it!" he began fiercely as we came up.

"*Courage, mon petit brave!*" soothed Justin. "Ten minutes, and it'll all be over and we'll have you up in the wheel chair. Say, old *embusque!* Will you have a small glass of cognac first?"

"Don't you touch it!" breathed Simondon passionately between his teeth. "Get out of here!"

"Hold up his leg, mees!" commanded Justin calmly. "Thus!"

Obediently I held the leg, incased from thigh to heel in an open plaster cast, at the desired angle. Simondon let out a piercing yell.

"*Oh, bon Dieu! Oh, là, là! Wait!*" Tears of agony streamed down his wasted cheeks. Wildly he tried to seize my hands. "Can't you hear me?" he sobbed. "Imbeciles! Stop!"

"Maybe we'd better," I murmured.

But, with swift and sure precision, Justin had already begun to strip the bandages.

"Higher!" he ordered briefly.

Again Simondon made a furious swing at my wrists. Again he screamed madly.

"Let's wait for the doctor," I urged.

Justin never looked up.

"Don't heed him, mees," he said simply. "'Tis

only his sickness speaking." Wise old Justin! "Rest tranquil, *petit*," he added; and he nodded to the young sufferer, who, suddenly docile beneath the firm, ministering hands, returned him a quivering smile of obedience. "It's almost finished," murmured Justin.

And indeed, in less time than it takes to tell, the cruelly binding plaster incasement was shed, extra layers of soft padding inserted, the cast readjusted and rebound; and Simondon, the tears still wet on his cheeks, was smiling happily and sipping a tiny glass of cognac. A half hour later, his fever abated and his red tasseled cap cocked rakishly over his one good eye, he was up in the wheel chair—for the first time in five months—and Justin was trundling him off for a brief promenade.

By the sheer authority of his spirit, the squat, grotesque, vulgar little old man had achieved in a few minutes what two nurses had labored vainly over for an hour. Shortly after he was on his rounds again, at his perpetual dog-trot, carrying a basin and making, as he passed me, his invariable joke—that he was taking a small gift to the Kaiser!

The first month in the big ward I was worked to death. But so was everybody else. Some of the nurses were ill, some of the auxiliaries were away, and an offensive was at its height. Consequently the rest of us worked under a terrific pressure. Ward Eighty-three, at that time the heaviest in the hos-

pital, had over fifty beds, each one filled with a *grand blessé*. Fifty backs to wash; fifty beds to make; fifty dressings to cut down, change and rebandage; fifty bedside tables to scrub; fifty meals to serve on individual tables; fifty temperatures and pulses to take—to say nothing of a thousand and one odd jobs, such as hot compresses every hour, hot drinks, medicines, diets, wounds to irrigate, beds to disinfect, which kept nurses and aids racing dizzily straight through the day. And even then we were always behind our schedule! The work was never done.

If anyone is suffering from a broken heart or a general stagnation of life—what O. Henry called “slow pulse”—a big hospital ward during the rush of an offensive is a good place to lose it. But there are compensations; for a sick warrior is nothing after all but a sick child, docile, naïve, craving for sympathy. He wants to be consoled for his suffering; he wants to be cured. He demands everything and gives everything. And at night as I passed, dog tired, down the ward, heads were raised, hands outstretched; and the shower of cries of “*Bonsoir, Mees!*”—“*à demain, Mees Californie!*”—were sweeter than bouquets of roses thrown across the footlights to a reigning star.

There were twelve soldiers for whose welfare I was specifically responsible, and who had the right to call me to their bedsides and demand whatsoever they pleased, from an extra piece of cotton batting

over their toes to the reasons why there are so many divorces in my country. Of these twelve, nine were under twenty-three and two looked not a day over sixteen, rosy cheeked and downy. After the first mists of strangeness had cleared away, and I began to view things more normally, that was the first thing that struck me—the amazing youth of the man. Despite their wounds and the stress of trench life in a brutal wintry climate, they fairly shouted life and vivid vitality. Their eyes were as clear as those of children, their laughter as fresh, their joy as spontaneous.

One morning I was washing the back of a young Breton lad whose torso, with its clean, flowing lines, would have delighted a sculptor.

“Claude,” I laughed, “you have a back almost as nice as Apollo’s.”

“Yes, mees? Truly?” he cried, blushing and deeply pleased.

I was puzzled by his delight, for Claude was a young coal miner who could not even sign his own name, and I knew he did not know Apollo from Moses. The next morning, as I was rubbing him down with alcohol, he twisted about to ask shyly:

“Mees Californie, is my back still as nice as Apollo’s?”

As I stared at him blankly he repeated the query in slightly different form; and then the truth dawned upon me: he thought Apollo was some other boy in

the ward whose back didn't have any bedsores!

It would be a great mistake to conclude that the ward of a military hospital, simply because it is the container of so much concentrated pain, is, therefore, the natural abode of sadness and gloom. In the first place, the soldiers, taken as a whole, are not sick: they are only wounded—a vast difference. Save for their injuries, the majority of them are practically well men. In the second place, they are young, and, speaking again, in the large, magnificently healthy.

Consequently the large airy ward, with its community of bedfast inhabitants, resembles a menagerie of fifty playful cubs—each chained to his own post, to be sure, but capable, nevertheless, of considerable mischief—rather than the classic conception of a sick room, with lowered lights and voices.

Pain there is, certainly, up to the limits of human endurance; but this is borne with a spirit, an ironic fortitude, which is a Frenchman's most natural possession. A soldier suffering the refined tortures of hell during the dressing of an infected wound is yet capable of making a jest with twitching lips that will send his comrades off into spasms of laughter.

Nor is this humor an affectation. It is his instinctive reaction to pain. And, as a reverse side of the same shield, he is also capable at such times of the finest flower of courtesy, such as saying simply, "Thank you, doctor!" to the man who has just cut off his leg without ether.

But if he can and does endure intense pain superbly, it is no sign, as the school-boys say, that he intends to endure lesser, or what he considers unnecessary ones, with like dignity. As a matter of fact, a pain in the great toe, a crease in the draw-sheet, or, above all, that thing most dreaded by every Frenchman, a *courant d'air* from an open window, will produce loud lamentation, which will set the entire ward in an uproar. For these are the small ills that can be righted, and therefore must be—and instantaneously, if you please.

An incident in point took place recently in the ward. The chief surgeon, when making his morning rounds, decided that a superficial incision of perhaps an inch should be made in a certain wound in order to permit the free passage of the Carrel-Dakin solution, the famous antiseptic irrigation which keeps down bacterial poisoning. It was not considered sufficiently important to remove the patient to the operating room, or even to administer ether. Three or four snips by the ward doctor and the thing would be done. But Georges, the party of the first part in the operation, had decided he wanted an anæsthetic. He did not intend to be hurt. He had understood that in this grand hospital *de luxe* the Americans had the latest methods; that they did not chop a poor soldier up without first “putting him to sleep.” Vain were my efforts to soothe him.

The other men, delighted by this fantastic griev-

ance—for most of them detest the anæsthetizing process—egged him on with a gayety that soon became riotous. They exchanged bets on the possible chances of recovery from such a grave operation. They promised to write to his mother and to his fiancée in the event of his death. One soldier, an erstwhile opera singer, consented to chant his mass. Another offered to confess him, and adjured him to make a clean breast of all his sins. At lunch, with their wine, they drank to him a solemn *morituri te salutamus!*

The day became a Fête of Death dedicated to Georges and his inch-long cut. And when at length the crucial hour arrived, and the doctor and nurse entered with a tray of glittering instruments, every man of them was up on his elbow in bed, and the opera singer began softly to chant the mass. But Georges was nowise abashed by all this jest and *blague*. As the doctor approached his bedside he began to writhe, and gasped:

“*Mon Dieu*, how I suffer! Oh! Ah! *Doucement!*—Gently!”

“*Un!*” murmured the opera singer at his side.

The nurse pulled down the covers and elicited another loud groan.

“*Oh, là, là! Doucement! Doucement!*”

“*Deux! Trois!*” counted his neighbor.

The ward meantime was one gurgle of suppressed laughter. The nurse started to undo the bandage.

"*Doucement!*" sang out Georges lustily.

"*Quatre!*"

The doctor picked up an instrument from the tray and touched the wound-opening tentatively.

"*Oh, Nom de Dieu! Oh, docteur! Doucement! Doucement! Doucement!*"

"*Cinq! Six! Sept!*"

"What's biting you, old man?" laughed the doctor in English. "You know this doesn't hurt."

"*Doucement!*" roared Georges in reply.

"*Huit!*"

"I don't understand this," said the nurse, glancing at the chart. "He has no temperature."

"*Doucement! Doucement!*" moaned Georges.

"*Neuf! Dix!*" registered the opera singer.

The doctor snipped off an infinitesimal flake of dead cuticle.

"*Oh, bon Dieu! Doucement! Doucement! Doucement! Doucement! Oh, cher docteur! Doucement!*"

"*Onze! Douze! Treize! Quatorze! Quinze!*"

By this time the men were in a broad ripple of laughter—all save Georges, who continued to howl with every move the doctor made. But finally the operation was over. Doctor and nurse disappeared.

"How many?" I inquired.

"Twenty-eight!" grinned the opera singer.

Georges had screeched *Doucement!* eight-and-twenty times inside of five minutes, at a practically painless operation! And now the opera singer began

to mock him by singing *Doucement!* in every conceivable accent up and down the scale.

"Son of generations of monkeys!" grunted Georges contemptuously. He turned to me: "A drop of cognac, mees! Regard how my hand trembles."

And he lifted that member and waggled it before my eyes without the faintest glimmer of a smile. Needless to say, he got his cognac; he had earned it. The men had expected amusement and Georges had done his best not to disappoint them. Such a mirth provoker in a ward is worth any amount of drugs. Moreover, it is only justice to Georges to add that, in a subsequent operation, he had his leg taken off above the knee with a coolness, a gay devil-may-care that touched even his pain-hardened comrades. Upon that occasion never a single *Doucement* fell from his lips. He was far more concerned over the noon meal he was forced to miss, and cursed like a pirate because he must lose both his lunch and his leg at the same fell clip!

But even Georges, with all his impudence and nerve, had his black moments, his fits of melancholy, of piercing nostalgia, of deadly ennui of the soul. *Cafard* the soldiers call these seasons of gloom. "Blue devils" is our equivalent term. While the Russian muzhik says simply: "My soul suffers!"

The men dread this *cafard* more than an operation. To fight off its approach they reread old letters, finger over beloved relics in their small sacks of per-

sonal belongings, smoke miles of cigarettes, read endless romances, or write up their simple histories—poor, meager, ill-spelled and laboriously penciled narratives of the individual rôles they played in the present mighty conflict.

But sooner or later the *cafard*, lying in wait, gets them. That Georges, however, witty, jeering, pungent as Javelle water, should fall a victim filled me with surprise. But one morning I came upon him with his head smothered under a pillow. And when I lifted it off, fancying him asleep, his young face startled me with its look of utter and naked misery, which he was too proud to show his little world.

"Why, what is the matter?" I cried.

He looked at me silently with brooding, gloom-filled eyes.

"I have the *cafard*," he said simply at last.

Despite himself, his mouth quivered. Every one of those arid and sterile hours of his sickness had piled its heavy weight upon his soul.

"Ah, when will it all be finished?" he breathed. "When shall I see my mother, my little sister, again?"

For this I had no reply. Georges' chances of recovery at that time were about fifty-fifty.

"Do you see that verse?" He pointed to the high clock tower of the hospital, which bore, in old French script, the following couplet:

*Every hour wounds;
The last one kills.*

Georges repeated it slowly, with intense bitterness.

"The other day I counted how many hours I had lain couched here. Three thousand three hundred and twenty hours!" He held up to the light a yellow, emaciated hand. "Pretty, isn't it? Every hour wounds, and the last one kills, eh? Well, I'll take my killing all at once, thanks. I'm tired, you know. I'll dispatch myself some day!"

A tender word on my part at that instant and Georges would have wept outright—and never forgiven me for disgracing him! I tried a joke—his own favorite weapon.

"Well," I said, smiling, "if you want to die right away, this very minute, here's a method."

And I picked up from his bedside table a broken and rusted knife. It was his trench knife, a battered old wreck of an affair, the big blade of which was still crusted with dried blood—Georges' own blood, spilt there when he got his wound, and carefully preserved by him as a souvenir. As a lethal instrument that knife was a joke, and I trusted he would see the point. But I underestimated the depth of blackness in his soul. For a long moment he stared at me, silent. Then suddenly, with a swift and violent movement, he tore open his chemise at the throat.

"*Voilà!* There you are!" he exclaimed. I laid the knife out of reach in a hurry.

"*Peu!*" he said contemptuously, and turned his back on me.

It later appeared that the *cafard* in this particular case had its origin in a girl. Following hard upon his operation, as soon as he could grasp a pen, Georges had written to his fiancée, telling her that he was now a cripple and releasing her from her engagement. And it seemed that the girl had taken him at his word. Not a single line had he received from her! And added bitterness lay in the fact that, deep down in the unplumbed depths of him, Georges had a fine upstanding confidence in himself, and believed that, cripple or no cripple, he was a pretty fine match for any girl.

As the days filed by without news he began to bleed inwardly. But one afternoon, shortly afterward, as I passed down the ward I beheld by Georges' bedside her hand tightly locked in his, a small, pale-browed but radiant young person, in a heavy veil of black crêpe. Georges, exultant and gay, beckoned me over.

"*C'est ma fiancée!*" he introduced proudly.

Upon receipt of his letter she had waited only to bury a relative, and then hastened up from their native village to give him her reply in person.

In the hospital there were innumerable love affairs that came under my eye as the busy, monotonously diverse days flowed by; and the soldiers, one by one, made me their confidante while I wrapped their bandages, made their beds, or scrubbed the ingrained

mud of the Somme from their feet with liquid soap and a flesh brush. But there is one that lingers in my mind because it became a game, half playful, half serious, between me and the soldier lover.

On visitors' day the spacious *salle* was always crowded by a throng of wives, mothers, sweethearts and friends. Before the big double doors were thrown open each soldier had his tiny pocket mirror out, combing his mustache and grooming himself for the occasion. Among these, I came to observe Coussin, a jeweler by trade, who, with his wife and small son of three, lived in Montmartre before the war.

Coussin was a quiet young man with an understanding eye and an unfailing sunny smile. I always hated to hurt him in dressing his wound, because it hurt him so to hurt me. As the hands of the clock approached two he would shift on his pillow so that his glance could reach the door without obstruction. He was one of those rare Frenchmen who do not smoke; and he would lie thus, motionless, a little pale from emotion, his eyes glued to that distant door. They never left it save to consult his watch. And when finally, on the stroke of two, his wife, Fabienne, appeared, a pretty, dark young woman, trimly veiled, pushing her son ahead of her, Coussin would lift himself abruptly out of bed—despite stern orders to the contrary, for there was still danger of hemorrhage—and wave his uninjured arm.

And Fabienne would lift her wee son for a salute to *Papa!* After which she would start down the long, crowded aisle. Smiling, her eyes still clinging to those of Coussin, she moved sedately, controlling her eagerness; but at the end she always ran. The kiss that followed was—well, indescribable. You will have to imagine it. And the look which they exchanged afterward was even more than a kiss, more passionate, tender, revealing.

As the afternoon drew on to a close the bell rang, warning the visitors that it was time to begin to get ready to think of departure. It was at this juncture that the comedy with Coussin began. Earlier in the day he had secretly set his watch half an hour back. If he could have got hold of a stick long enough to reach from his bed I am convinced he would have unblushingly turned back the hands of the ward clock to match, without a single compunction. As it was, he and Fabienne blandly ignored the first bell, as none of their private concerns. But when it rang again, and the orderlies began shooing the dilatory ones out into the corridor, Coussin would glance guilelessly at his watch, start, compare it hastily with the ward clock, and then exclaim with an air of surprise, mingled with indignation:

“Again too fast! But it is no good—that big old clock. This admirable little watch of mine has not been out a minute in five years!”

And Fabienne would regard lovingly the admirable

little watch of her admirable little husband. In the end, of course, he won his extra half hour, and after the departure of his wife his timepiece and that of the ward would somehow mysteriously synchronize. But this was not quite all of the comedy. When the visitors had gone basins were passed round and the men bathed themselves before supper. But on the day of his wife's visit Coussin always refused to bathe.

"I don't wish to!" he would say with gentle obstinacy.

"But you must. It's the rule. It's good for you."

"Not to-night. To-morrow."

"But to-night it's very necessary. Many visitors—many microbes."

"I don't wish to—to-night." He would shake his head with smiling decision.

"But why don't you want to wash to-night?" I asked him on the first occasion.

He gave me a single full look, and the truth dawned upon me: He did not wish to wash away the kisses of his wife and little son!

"To-morrow night I will wash twice!" he added magnanimously; and upon that we compromised.

There are certain French words—one can hardly call them slang—which have come into popular usage since the war, and which one hears constantly on the lips of the soldier. One of these is *pinard*, the trench word for wine, corresponding loosely to our term

“booze.” Another is *copain*. A *copain* is a pal, a chum, a trench comrade; one with whom a soldier shares his bed and his blanket and whiles away the long dull hours of inactivity. Not to have such a friend at the Front—or *là-bas*—Out There—as the soldiers call it—is a severe deprivation; for it means spiritual isolation; one puny soul bearing alone the terrific impact of the war. To illustrate this tender feeling toward a *copain*:

One day I was given the task of taking down the histories of the men in my ward; and I discovered, somewhat to my surprise, that a postman, a quiet, drab, nondescript little man with a bald spot, had won both the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille Militaire. To me, his tale was astounding in its valor, for this timid, oldish little person seemed the sort to flee for his life, like a frightened rabbit, at the first big thunder of the guns.

It appeared that one night he had volunteered to go out upon the battlefield, still under French and German fire, to rescue a fallen soldier. While carrying his charge a shell exploded near at hand, injuring both his legs and wounding his companion afresh. At this point he might have saved himself by deserting his comrade. Instead of which, he remained all night beside him; made his dressings; fed him the dew that collected on the adjacent leaves, drop by drop; remained beside him throughout the following day, under constant bombardment; and at

nightfall got him, like a sack of meal, up on his shoulders, and, crawling on his hands and knees, dragging his injured legs—"Grâce à Dieu it was not my arms," he said, "or I never could have made it!"—he eventually reached a dressing station, five kilometers away. But he had paid the toll of that long wait upon the infected field of glory. Gangrene set in and it was found necessary to amputate both feet. Never again could he be a postman.

"That was very splendid of you!" I said at the end of his recital.

"But no! But no!" he denied swiftly. "You see, 'twas my *copain*!"

There is still another word the war has brought into being; an epithet that, falling in anger from the lips of a soldier, is the supreme and ultimate insult. It is the word that has been coined to cover the case of the man who evades military service. *Embusque* is the French term. Literally it means one who hides in ambush. But practically it has come to embrace all who, through graft or influence, hide in easy administrative jobs, soft snaps, sinecures, saving their pusillanimous skins instead of taking their chances with their fellows in the trenches. The contempt for this particular brand of coward is great, and insults are extremely likely to be the portion of any civilian who walks the streets of Paris these days in mufti.

An American ambulance driver on the field service

at Verdun told me that, on a recent *permission* in Paris, he had taken all his uniforms to the tailor to be cleaned.

"It seemed bully," he said, "to have a real American all-over bath and get into real American clothes again—that is, it seemed bully until I ventured out upon the boulevards *en civile*. But presently I began to hear '*Embusque!*' '*Embusque!*' all round me in the air. Sometimes it was hurled in my face in passing; sometimes it was hissed close to my ear. And finally there approached four *poilus* abreast, *mutilé* every one, taking the entire width of the pavement, stumping along on their wooden pegs, gay as larks, and chattering seventeen to the dozen. Convalescents, I figured them, out on their promenade. When they came alongside, naturally I gave them the road. But they halted, confronted me contemptuously, and cried: '*Embusque! Embusque vous!*' Well, it was too much for me. I beat it back to the tailor and got into respectable clothes."

Like many opprobrious epithets, however, *embusque*, among friends, has a different slant; used thus, it becomes a term of endearment, a sort of rough caress. A soldier, fresh Out There, muddy-booted, unshaved, bristling with the accouterments of war, will clump awkwardly into the hospital, bend over his wounded comrade, salute him on both cheeks, and exclaim jovially: "Well, old *embusque*, how goes it?" And on the morning following my weekly afternoon

off the men never failed to greet me: "Aha, Mees *Embusque!* You deserted us yesterday. *Embusque vous!*"

Used so, it was a term of affection. Nevertheless, it is a word to be handled with discretion. Returning from the hospital late one night to my quiet hotel, I found the place in a tumult. The police had invaded the kitchen; and the Dutch chef, a stout, pompous white-capped tyrant, before whom the entire establishment walked in terror, lay on the floor with his head smashed in, weltering in his own gore. Over him stood the head waiter, a tiny sprite of a Frenchman, hands clenched, eyes blazing, and looking ready to jump on the chef's fat stomach if that prostrate gentleman so much as batted an eyelid.

"What's the matter?" I inquired.

"He—he called me *embusque!* Me!" exploded the head waiter, stammering in his rage. "I knocked the fat swine down and his head hit the stove."

The police, upon hearing the provocation, vindicated the servant completely, and the Dutchman went to the hospital to mend his head and his manners. It was another version of Owen Wister's famous Western tale: "When you call me that—smile!"

At the end of three months I was transferred to another ward with only twelve beds—a small, tranquil family, it seemed to me, after the continual rush and hurry of the big receiving ward. But still there was plenty to do. No time to sit like a lady, with

folded lilylike hands. And the first three days, in addition to the regular routine, I had a dying man in charge. For three days and three nights he lay dying from general gas infection, a poor wreck, too ghastly to look upon with composure. His face, under the process of decay, had turned a horrible greenish yellow; beneath one eye yawned a deep unhealed bayonet gash; his mouth was filled with poisonous ulcers; and his tongue was so swollen that he could scarce articulate.

One leg had been amputated at the thigh in a vain effort to arrest the gangrene; but the infection had immediately showed in the other leg. The stench of this moribund organism was such that, with every window flung wide open, the odor was still almost overpowering. And the danger of infection was no imaginary fear. A nurse, with her hands tender from being constantly in water, is always crocking off bits of superficial skin.

Conceive the daily dressing and bandaging of this poor wretch; the daily changing of linen, soaked through and through with deadly suppurations, down to the very mattress! In touching him the doctor, the nurse and the orderlies wore gloves; so, also, did I whenever that was possible. But at this time there was a temporary shortage of nurses and I had the ward to myself, save when the head nurse looked in for a minute to ask if all went well. And perhaps I would be busy when the cry would come:

"Mees! Mees! Number Two! A drink! Quick!"

Upon which I would drop everything in a panic and fly to his bedside, barely in time to prevent him from swallowing the contents of the spittoon; for he had long, lean, powerful arms, this Number Two, which were always wandering, always in motion. With these he would pull into his bed whatever of the adjacent landscape he could lay hands on; for this reason we were forced to discard the bedside screens that usually inclose the dying. Once this blind, wandering hand discovered a thermometer on the bedside table of a neighbor. Instantly it was in his mouth and was broken in two between his teeth. Nothing for it but to thrust in my bare hand and pull the pieces out. No time for rubber gloves! He might die of gas gangrene; but I was not going to have him die of a thermometer.

Happily he did not suffer and at times he was conscious. Once, as I held up his head—this time with gloves—to give him water, he looked into my eyes and said, quite matter-of-factly:

"*C'est la fin, n'est-ce-pas?*"—It's the end, isn't it?

As he lingered and still lingered on, there came a subtle change over the attitude of the ward with regard to this long-spun-out dying. At first, when, after what seemed to them a proper and suitable length of time, Number Two still stubbornly held on, complaints began to be heard. No Frenchman loves

an open window. Were they all to die of colds in the head because of one inconsiderate fellow? Frankly, they had had enough of him. It was not courteous to linger thus!

"*Bon Dieu*, not yet? Will he go to-night, think you?" they would impatiently inquire.

But as the feeble flame still burned mysteriously on, unquenched, this feeling gradually altered; it merged into a wondering awe and respect. The gallant fight of Number Two, his gaspings, his wrestlings with the invisible foe, commanded their admiration.

"How strong he is!" they would murmur respectfully, "What force!"

"'Tis the force of youth," commented another.

"'Tis sad to die like that, so young, so brave—*n'est-ce-pas*, mees?"

And when the final spells of periodic shuddering began, showing the last phase was at hand, they watched him with undisguised interest.

"He's passing!" announced one.

"Not yet," retorted another, almost with pride. "See him drink! *Pauvre brave!* 'Tis a good warrior."

"He'll go to-night—that's sure!"

They began to argue about it.

But he did not go that night, nor yet the next morning; and the afternoon found him still battling feebly for breath. Late in the afternoon of the

third day his wife arrived, a shabby, terrified little peasant woman, infinitely pathetic in her rusty black crêpe and her gnarled toil-worn hands. Accompanying her was the soldier's father, a gaunt Breton, in smock and wooden shoes, with a small, round beribboned hat like that of a priest, and beneath it deep-set, intelligent eyes.

Upon me devolved the unpleasant task of breaking the news. I led them out into the corridor and, for a space, I could find no words. What is the polite formula in such a case, anyhow? Perhaps the wife read the trouble in my face, for her eyes upon me were like those of a dog, piteous, begging not to be beaten. She grasped me by both elbows.

"How goes it?" she breathed. "He is better? Say that my husband is better!"

The situation was intolerable.

"He is dying," I blurted out brutally.

With a loud cry she flung herself into my arms. The father gazed stonily out the window. Soon, however, she had composed herself, and I asked whether they wished a priest. Was her husband a Catholic? Briefly they conferred apart, and then the woman turned, with a timid query, Would it cost anything? And with that the whole bleak truth came out. They were poor, very poor, it appeared; so poor, indeed, that they had sold their cow to enable them to come to Paris.

They had counted the expenses down to the last

sou; but they had not counted the expense of a priest.

I assured them we had an abbé in the hospital and that his services were free. Upon which they decided to have him. An hour later he celebrated Holy Communion, the soldiers looking on with simple, unaffected interest. Only one blemish marred the serenity of the sacred event: At the crucial moment Number Two absolutely refused to receive the Host. Twice the murmuring abbé bent over him and inserted the holy wafer, and twice it was rejected by the swollen lips.

"Let's try it with water," I suggested.

The dying man drank thirstily as ever, but again refused the symbol. I was nonplused, for plainly those black eyes staring up into mine were conscious. After the departure of the abbé a soldier beckoned me to his side.

"He's not a Catholic," he explained softly.

As daylight waned there came a brief respite in the struggle; Number Two breathed more easily; he lay quiet, relaxed; his invisible antagonist seemed to have removed a short way off. The men meantime chatted cheerfully. Some sang.

Presently a knock sounded at the door. It was the X-ray man from upstairs, who had come to take a photograph of a certain plaster cast, an extraordinarily fine specimen, made at the Front.

"Who's the new *blessé* with the leg cast?" he called

out jovially. He consulted a card. "Peletier's the name."

"Present!" came a voice from the corner.

"But you can't take a picture now!" I protested, scandalized. "A man's dying in here. Wait until he's dead."

"Can't! The cast comes off to-morrow morning. Got to take the picture right away. Here's the order."

Perforce I let him come in. And now a lively bustle ensued. The bed containing the soldier adorned with the desired cast was wheeled into the center of the room, the leg exposed to the best advantage, bandages unwrapped, the bedcovers composed neatly, the tripod set up, the lights arranged.

Then the photographer's head disappeared beneath the black camera cloth. It would be vain to deny that the men enjoyed it hugely. They watched with eagerness as the photographer's head emerged from the dark folds. He altered slightly the position of the cast, looked again, and made a second change.

"Good!" he exclaimed at length briskly; and he held up a warning hand. "Now! Ready, old man! Tell your leg to smile! Tell it to regard the little bird."

At this threadbare joke a veritable shout of laughter went up from the ward. Even the dying man smiled!

"*Regardez!* He smiles!" cries a soldier, pointing. "*Bon garçon!*"

The mirth renewed itself. It was the strangest death scene I had ever viewed.

Number Two lingered through the night and slipped away the next morning so quietly that none of us knew the exact moment; and his strength and his smile at the photographer's jest became a legend in the ward.

There is much talk nowadays of the great number of desertions, and one's fancy is fed by all kinds of wild and fantastic tales. Most of them are pure inventions, or have grown, like snowballs rolling down hill, from the merest innocent fact. The French are not deserters by temperament. One does not hear of whole companies of Frenchmen, bereft of their officers, falling on their knees, lifting up their hands, and crying: "*Kamerad!* Spare me; for I am a father!" Simply, that is not the French note. To drag in his papahood at such a moment would appear to a Frenchman as grotesquely humorous and absurd.

And yet it would be idle to assert that there have been no French desertions. But most of them are pathological cases. The human brain can experience just so much bloodshed, so much killing, without going a little mad. And the more sensitive, finely tempered and humanitarian the person, the heavier the spiritual strain.

The following story is a case in point. It was told me by the would-be deserter himself, a young play-

wright of twenty-four, called, let us say, Vernier, who had been invalided back to Paris. He related it with a certain mordant humor, as being something of a joke on himself. The background of the story, his repeated wounds and illnesses, his hatred of killing, which grew with the months into a morbid soul sickness, were supplied by his mother and a friend:

Vernier, nervous, high-strung, idealistic, had been in the war since the days of mobilization. Repeatedly wounded, but never gravely, constantly ill from exposure, he gravitated back and forth between the trenches and the hospitals, not remaining very long at a time in either. He took part in a number of attacks and killed a number of Germans. He didn't like it. About Christmas he wrote to his mother: "To be a really successful trench warrior one should be made of pig iron clean through: no head, no heart, no nerves!" And he added: "Frankly I am sick, sick, sick to death of it all."

Shortly after this he was wounded again and went to the hospital; a month later he was back in the lines. Threatened with a relapse, he was sent to a shelter behind the trenches. And here the breakdown came. Fortunately his mother was with him. To her Vernier declared he had killed his last man in battle. He swore a solemn oath never to take another human life. He was through! He was going to clear out, escape to Canada, become a farmer and start life anew.

He spoke wildly, passionately, in tones that carried far beyond the small room. His mother listened, gray with terror. She implored him not to be foolish, to hush, to speak lower; to consider himself, his mother, France. Vernier, however, remained firm.

“But they’ll shoot you, my son, as a deserter!”

And to this Vernier vehemently replied:

“Mother, can’t you conceive that it’s more honorable to stand up against a wall and die publicly for your faith than to die like a dog in a hole in the ground for something you don’t believe? No; I’ve killed my last man, I tell you! If they want to kill me for that let them kill.”

Frenzied, the mother flung herself upon him, trying to stifle with her hand that dangerous young mouth; but the damage was already done. His loud speech had been overheard. Within the hour he was summoned before the commandant and asked whether the charge were true. Far from denying, Vernier admitted everything up to the hilt; he even went farther and embroidered his point of view. The commandant listened attentively; and at the end he spoke.

“He told me,” related Vernier in excellent English, “that in ordinary circumstances I should be shot the next morning as a deserter—and thus achieve what was so evidently my desire. But there was somebody else to be considered—namely, my mother. For, in overhearing me, they had overheard her entreaties

as well. The son of such a mother must be worth saving; and, therefore, he was returning my life, plainly forfeit, to this brave mother of France. But he named a condition. And after that," continued Vernier with a reminiscent grin, "he simply cut loose and lit into me. Asked ironically whether I supposed I was the only man in France who was opposed to the shedding of blood! I was a socialist, eh? Well, he was a philosophic anarchist! Went me one stronger, you see."

And this was the commandant's condition: He asked Vernier to remember that this bloody war was a trial, not to him alone but to all Frenchmen with a spiritual nature; and, as they were strong for the common good, he asked Vernier to be strong also—and hold his tongue. Simply that—to be strong and hold his tongue! And to this Vernier consented. He had to, he said, after the commandant's courtesy to his mother. And, also, he was not going to be outdone in delicacy. When last heard of, Vernier was still holding his tongue Out There.

There was one question the soldiers asked constantly. They began the first day I entered the hospital; and I had no reply. On the last day they were still asking it; and still I had no reply. That question was: When will the United States enter the war?

Observe the form of that question. They did not say If, but When? For to most of them it seemed inevitable that, sooner or later, we, the big sister re-

public, with kindred form of government and ideals, should come to see what France, with her fine lucidity, had seen for so long: that she is battling not alone for her own right to exist as a free, unenslaved nation—though assuredly she is doing that—but for America also, and for the doctrine of democracy, as opposed to the doctrines of force and the gauntleted fist, all over the world.

But also, quite aside from this, the French soldiers want us to come in because they like us personally. They like us and they want us to fight upon their side.

Not long ago Georges expressed these sentiments in a nutshell. He had been lying staring up at the Stars and Stripes, which, with the Tricolor, was tacked above the ward door.

"It's pretty," he remarked pensively, "that starry flag. It's not bad at all, truly! And it goes well with ours. It would be pleasant to see them both flying at large over Verdun—*n'est-ce-pas*, mees?"

As I write this, that wish of a wounded French soldier boy has come true.

MISS GREENHORN GOES A-NURSING

"WATCH that man!" said the nurse to her volunteer aid, nodding toward a bed that had been tilted at an angle by means of wooden blocks inserted under the legs, so that its occupant, a wounded Frenchman, lay downhill, his feet higher than his head. He looked as if he were past the need of watching and were dead already, that rigid, immobile, white-draped figure. His face was a livid mask, with heavy shadows beneath the closed lids, pinched nostrils, deep carved lines of pain round the bluish mouth, and a black unkempt bristle of beard that showed up startlingly against the white of the pillows. Not a movement, not a stir or visible breath or touch of warm living color. He was a fresh arrival, thirty-six hours from Verdun, and in the morning—if he lasted that long!—he was going up for operation. Both of his legs were broken above the knees.

"Watch that man!" warned the nurse again from the door. "I'm going off duty for two hours. Lord, I'm tired!"

"Oh, I'll watch him all right," promised the young

aid confidently. "That's what I'm here for," she added with dreamy sweetness.

The nurse walked over to the bed, bent down and took the soldier's pulse.

"He seems all right," she murmured dubiously. "Pretty weak. Well, keep an eye on him." She sighed a sigh of pure fatigue and departed.

Left to herself, the auxiliary fussed about the ward for a few minutes, after which she, too, crossed to the bedside of the man on whom she had been commanded to keep an eye. For a space she stood staring down watchfully upon him. That was what she had been told to do, and she did it conscientiously.

Then, her duty performed, she returned to her seat at the table and commenced a letter to a girl friend. And while she is thus engaged, and the stage is set for action—and probably tragic action—let me give a brief thumbnail sketch of her.

It was a big war hospital in France, and the volunteer aid was a girl from the Middle West who, in a fine white flame of enthusiasm for the Allied cause, had come all the way from her native town as fast as train and ship could bear her in order to nurse the fine, brave, glorious and magnificent French soldiers. For it was with such glowing adjectives that she described them, and she could not even think of them without springing tears. The dear, rugged, war-torn heroes, flat upon beds of pain, with romantic white bandages bound about their brows, gazing up at her

with unutterable gratitude in their dying eyes. For it was thus, movie-wise, she pictured them; and she pictured herself as a nurse, a sort of ministering-angel-of-mercy ingénue cast, divinely compassionate, dressed for the part in pure spotless white garments, on her head that very becoming French coif—it had looked so attractive in the pictures; she really must have one of them—bending over a dying *poilu*, soothing his fevered brow with cool white fingers, murmuring gentle words of hope, promising to write to his mother, and finally kissing him good-by into Heaven. She had read of nurses doing that, of soldiers whispering faintly, “Kiss me good-by for my mother!” And she knew—she had a sure instinct—that she would be good in that part. For, as she told her girl friend, she had so much sympathy and tenderness in her nature!

So great had been her zeal to help along the above lines that she had not tarried to take any tiresome, humdrum courses in nursing. For the war might be over any time, she argued, and she couldn’t bear to lose a single precious instant. And so she had come right on. She had come right on, and with fool’s luck she had arrived in Paris at an opportune moment—for her. A mighty drive was on on the Western Front, and the backwash of French wounded was pouring in—a vast, unending, sanguinary tide. It was the tail end of summer, a terrific, heart-breaking summer, on top of a terrific heart-breaking spring,

and no let-up in sight. Doctors and nurses and aids were exhausted, pegged out, at the end of their tethers. Some of the workers had collapsed under the abnormal tension, and the rest toiled on, showing their fatigue by curt crisp orders, by quick bursts of irritation or sudden explosions of savage temper. It was into this dynamic atmosphere that romantic little Miss Greenhorn walked one day, utterly incompetent technically and spiritually, but self-confident, unabashed, full of her dream of those fine, splendid French soldiers—poor, wounded darlings!—and strong in the belief of her own divine function to succor and save—in that very attractive coif: And they gave her a place. Such was the stern necessity of the hour. Here was another pair of hands, another pair of feet; certainly they could scrub tables, carry slops, run errands, and thus divert fatigue from the more important trained members of the corps. And so Miss Greenhorn donned her coif—her premonition concerning it was right; it was, indeed, very fetching—and prepared blithely to materialize her Florence-Nightingale-Mary-Pickford dream.

They assigned her to a small ward of ten. The orderly had not arrived, which is a salient characteristic of orderlies, and the nurse bade her take a pail of slops to the lavabo. It was a heavy pail, too heavy for her slight shoulders. After that she carried piles of blood-stained linen to the same destina-

tion, and following hard upon that several morning bedpans. It was not distinguished work, and dainty little Miss Greenhorn performed these lowly duties with a disdainful nose in air. 'Twas not for this she had traveled all the way to France! The ward doctor, noting the contemptuous, gingerly fashion in which she held her burdens at arm's length from her immaculate linen costume, murmured ironically to the nurse:

"We've got a queen in disguise among us. Look out!"

Presently she was set to make a bed. Now in the course of all her fair young life Miss Greenhorn had not made half a dozen beds, and, moreover, she did not deem it a matter of grave importance. Still she was willing to oblige.

"Poor man!" she breathed, hanging above him tenderly. "How grateful he must feel toward me!" And, smiling her Florence-Nightingale-Mary-Pickford smile, she began pulling away a sheet at random. The soldier let out a yell of fury:

"Imbecile! Are you trying to kill me? Oh, *mon Dieu!* Get out!"

The nurse dropped her work and came running. It appeared that, instead of the bed sheet proper, the novice had got hold of another which, quadruple-folded, formed part of the padding of a wooden fracture-box that held the soldier's broken leg; and with the first tug she had all but capsized the entire ap-

paratus and spilled fracture-box, leg and soldier out upon the floor.

Miss Greenhorn backed off from the scene, deeply mortified. Her sensitive feelings were hurt. The man had called her an imbecile! The very first words a French soldier had addressed to her—to her who had traveled five thousand miles to nurse him—had been not “You are heavenly kind, miss!” or “Kiss me, for I am dying!” but a brutal “Imbecile! Get out!” It was a rude jolt to her rosy dream. In addition, the nurse reprimanded her sharply, and for the next two back-breaking hours she made beds under a dragon eye of supervision, made and remade them.

Everything she did was wrong, clumsy, maladroit, and had to be altered twice, thrice, while the men turned pale under the prolonged strain and sweated or muttered nervously “Let be, mees! Enough! Oh, good God!” After her first mishap they were deadly afraid of her. And so sensitive spots went unbathed, uneased; temperatures shot up, and infected wounds began to throb, while little Miss Greenhorn took her first lesson in nursing. It was hard upon her, for everyone within the circle of her inexperienced activities became irritated and vented their irritation freely; but it was even harder on her victims, the soldiers of France she had come so far to serve.

After two hours of constant stooping, kneeling and lifting heavy and helpless men, little red lightnings of pain began to play up and down her spine, her

shoulder muscles ached cruelly, and there was a dull roaring in her ears. Her feet, too, already swollen in their fashionable white buckskin pumps, began to hurt atrociously and to show a congested purple beneath the transparent white-silken hose. Above all things on earth, she desired to sit down five minutes and rest. Instead of this the nurse bade her disinfect a bed. Another unwieldy mattress to tug and haul about!

"Do I have to put this strong stuff into the water?" she demanded plaintively, holding up the disinfecting fluid. "It'll spoil my hands!"

She was proud of those hands. They were delicate and cool and white. And, besides, they were part of the stage property of her movie dream.

"If you intend to disinfect the bed, do so," returned the nurse dryly. "The case in that bed died of gas gangrene, and I shouldn't care to expose another patient to the microbes, even at the risk of spoiling your hands."

"May I have a pair of rubber gloves then?"

"We're short of rubber gloves just now. What we have are needed in the operating room."

Miss Greenhorn bent to her task in silence. Her cheeks were burning and her eyes were blurred with tears of rage and fatigue. As she stooped, dabbing futilely here and there with her cloth, the blunt voice of the nurse came to her:

"Don't shirk your work that way. That isn't half

disinfected. Here, give me the rag." And, squatting comfortably, she proceeded to give a thorough demonstration. "Don't be afraid to use a little elbow grease," she concluded ironically.

Miss Greenhorn bit back an angry retort. She had not come over to France to do low, menial, scrubby, grubby work and then be treated like a servant. At home she gave orders instead of receiving them. But aloud she only said "Thank you!" so low that the nurse glanced at her keenly and added: "Never mind. You'll learn some day. Now suppose you wash all the bedside tables. Remove everything from them first. And after that, if there's time, scrub the big table. Then the men's *déjeuner* will be coming along. Have you got the hot drinks from the diet kitchen? Ah, but I told you to do that always before eleven o'clock! The kitchen's closed now and the poor chaps have lost their nourishment for the morning. Try not to fail on that again. Oh, before you begin on the tables, please make me a hot compress for Number Two. You don't know how? Very well!" And with a smothered exclamation of impatience she hurried off to make it herself.

Somewhat subdued, Miss Greenhorn began on her tables. A few minutes later a peculiar sound from the adjacent bed caused her to look up and then cry hastily:

"Oh, nurse! That poor man—Number Six—he's vomiting."

But the nurse, with the hot compress and a patient's broken arm in her hands, could not disengage herself instantly. Moreover, her patience for the moment had gone into complete eclipse.

"When a man vomits, don't call me!" she barked savagely. "Hold something!"

But unfortunately little Miss Greenhorn could find nothing to hold. Terribly disconcerted, she flew round wildly in a circle, like a kitten chasing its tail, seeking a suitable vessel. But nothing seemed to present itself to her distracted gaze. The pail? Obviously too large! The bedside wine cup? Obviously too small! Oh, where—— But by this time the nurse had caught up a basin and was supporting the sick man's head.

"He's gone through everything," she said wearily. "We'll have to change the entire bed. Fetch some linen. And next time use a little horse sense, if you've such a thing concealed about your person."

During the change the patient groaned horribly. The sweat of exhaustion poured from his face. His flesh was clammy.

"Get some hot-water bottles," the nurse ordered tersely. "No, never mind, I'll do it. You'd probably scald him!"

Miss Greenhorn returned to her tables, the corners of her mouth dipping like those of a baby whose hands have been slapped. And during the rest of the morning Number Six's white face reproached her mutely.

In the afternoon she left another wide swath of errors behind her. The men thanked her politely, but declined her kind offers to shake up their pillows. When she took the temperatures she broke three thermometers hand-running, and French thermometers were rare commodities.

"I think they must have been cracked," she apologized. "They snapped so easily."

Later, marking up the temperature charts, she made atrocious blunders. Normal patients suddenly exhibited fever peaks high as the Himalayas. The astounded ward doctor, discovering such a one and its source, swore fervently and voted her a pest, with a double-barreled profane adjective attached. That night her feet ached so that she cried when she removed her shoes. And for that night and many nights thereafter she had her dinner in bed and fell to sleep immediately from sheer exhaustion.

And now, the résumé complete, let us skip a week and return to Miss Greenhorn as she sat writing a letter to her friend. Every few minutes, true to her orders, she had risen for a look at the patient she had been set to watch. She watched him dutifully, ignorantly. She was still Miss Greenhorn, with one short week of experience. Not once did it occur to her to query: What am I to watch this man for? What is likely to happen? What shall I do if it does? And yet she was not a particularly stupid girl. She was rather above the average in intelligence and

eagerness ; but so firmly had she riveted her gaze upon the romantic, the false, the pseudo-æsthetic aspects of her job, that she was temporarily blinded to its actual features. But that the unriveting process had already begun and was somewhat painful was evidenced by her letter to her friend. And as the man she was set to watch seems quiet, ominously quiet, let us peep a moment over her shoulder :

“DEAREST AMELIA: This is the very first time I have had a chance to sit down since I entered the hospital a week ago to-day. And oh, Amelia, before I say another word, I want to tell you: Don’t come over! Don’t, Amelia, don’t! With your delicate health you never would be able to stand it. The work is simply terrible—hard, brutal, back-breaking, menial. You should see my poor hands! And my feet! And never a single word of thanks from anybody. They just seem to take you and your sacrifices for granted, and they expect you to know how to do things letter-perfect, right off the reel. Of course I don’t know anything.

“The other day a soldier called me an imbecile, and that’s exactly what I am, Amelia, a proud, presumptuous, ignorant little fool! But I never dreamed how dangerous it is to be so ignorant. The nurse gives you some mean, insignificant little job that does not seem to amount to a hill of beans, and in the end it turns out to be something horribly important,

fraught with terrible consequences. For example: The other day a man had a relapse and all but died simply because I couldn't find something quickly for him to vomit into. The first consequence was that we had to change his bed. The second consequence was that the extra effort fatigued him so he couldn't eat any lunch. The third consequence was that, having eaten nothing, in the afternoon he had a relapse. For a while I thought he was going to die. Those were dark hours for me, Amelia! That night I offered to sit up with him—to make it up, you see. But the ward doctor said, 'No, let's give the poor devil a fighting chance!' That was horrid, wasn't it? He's atrocious, that young ward doctor, and he never loses a chance to intimate what he thinks of my presumption in offering my untrained services. He says my nerve, if he could get an X-ray of it, would make the celebrated Colossus of Rhodes look like a pygmy. He asked me seriously if I wasn't ashamed when I woke up in the middle of the night 'to be so dumb—not damn, but dumb—ignorant!' And I am, Amelia. But I really think I'm beginning slowly to learn. There's a sick soldier they've set me to watch right now. So horribly pale! So still! One——"

At this point Miss Greenhorn's pen trailed off and she sat bolt upright, staring before her into space. A sudden thought had smitten her, almost with the force of a blow. Why was he so pale? Why was he

still? Why, in short, had she been set to watch him? She rose rather hurriedly and went to his bedside. She would ask him what was the matter. Really it was an inspiration!

"How are you?" she questioned gently.

"*J'ai froid*," came the faint murmur from rigid lips.

"Ah! Cold, are you? Then I'll get you some hot-water bottles and they'll make you warm. Nice and warm!" And Miss Greenhorn sped away on her mission, delighted to be of service. "*Voilà!*" she cooed soothingly a few minutes later, slipping the heated bags into the foot of the bed. "Now you'll soon be warm! Nice and warm and cozy!" And she leaned above him solicitously, still vaguely troubled. Certainly he was ghastly pale!

It was at this juncture that the ward doctor, a busy, brusque, discerning young gentleman, blew into the room with a—

"Hullo, Miss—— How's that fellow——" A single glance at the fellow in question stopped the words as if a sudden hand had been clapped over his mouth. He sprang forward and threw down the covers. The soldier lay in a pool of blood. "My God! Hemorrhaging! Why didn't you call me?"

He wheeled on her savagely. But Miss Greenhorn's face had blanched almost as white as the counterpane. Her hand went up to her trembling lips.

"I—I—I didn't know!" she whispered. "He com-

plained of feeling cold, and so I—I gave him hot-water bottles.”

“Yah! In case of hemorrhage, when a man’s bleeding to death, for first-aid apply hot-water bottles! Fine! Where’s that tourniquet? I tied it onto the foot of the bed myself.”

“The—what?” stammered Miss Greenhorn, immeasurably terrified. She quailed before the look in his eye.

“Tourniquet! That piece of rubber tubing.”

“O-o-oh! That terra-cotta rubber thing, you mean! It made the bed look untidy and so I undid it. Let me see. Where——”

But the door had already slammed upon the doctor, who returned immediately with a tourniquet from the adjacent ward. Fortunately it was not an arterial, but a slow, oozing hemorrhage, and so the man did not die; but that was not Miss Greenhorn’s fault. And the doctor did not spare her:

“Why did you suppose his bed was tilted up so that his feet were higher than his head? Don’t you know that in itself is a sign of hemorrhage? Why did you suppose that tourniquet was tied to the foot of this particular bed? Do you see it on any of the other beds? That’s another sign! And what did you suppose you were set to watch him for anyhow? Zeppelins? You’ve been here a week now. Tell me, are you solid ivory from the neck up?”

I am not going to repeat the remainder of his

scathing remarks, for he was angry and his nerves were none of the best. In justice to Miss Greenhorn it must be said that she took her whaling like a gentleman. She did not once glance at the doctor, but kept her eyes fixed on the French soldier whose life she had jeopardized by her criminal ignorance. And in that moment she jettisoned the last fragments of her ministering-angel dream. Cool hands, fevered brows, the kiss-me-for-I-am-dying business—all the false, sentimental rubbish with which she had stuffed her romantic young head she let go by the board forever.

And that, for us, is the end of Miss Greenhorn, save to mention that she is a real person. She told me the tale herself six months later, with tears only half of laughter in her eyes. And then she affixed the moral, which in brief is this: That not all of France's enemies are behind the German guns.

From this solitary episode one may deduce most of the qualifications, both natural and acquired, that a volunteer nurse's aid should possess before ever she sets foot inside a war hospital. First of all she must have health. She must have the kind of health that does not break or crack or creak or show signs of wear in bad weather; the kind of health that can pile one hard day on top of another hard day, and one hard week on top of another hard week, and one hard month on top of another hard month, and keep right on without flagging or asking the captain to stop the

ship so she can get off and walk. Every auxiliary signs on for a period of at least three months, preferably six months; and in some hospitals abroad they sign on for the remainder of the war. The work is too severe for a delicate constitution; it has been known to put a crimp in a tough one; and it is unfair both to the soldier and to the hospital plant to have human machinery that is apt to break down any minute. This implies youth, resiliency, reservoirs of stored strength, the unspent increment of physical endurance; and, therefore, anyone outside the ages from twenty to forty should ponder deeply before entering this most exacting branch of the service.

Aside from good general health, the volunteer aid should possess what physicians term a high threshold to disease. She should not catch things readily. Microbes should be unable to obtain a foothold. In this respect even healthy people vary widely. One person will take the mumps if there is a case in the next county; another may sleep in the same bed with the victim and go unscathed. There was a young woman in our ward who caught everything. Every little pirate microbe that sailed the invisible seas of air with his jolly skull-and-crossbones flag knew her for a friendly island, had her marked down in his log book, and put in for food and repairs, sure of safe harborage.

Tonsillitis, grippe, infected finger, swollen glands, infected eye, tonsillitis again—she had them one after

another as fast as she could, and she finally came home with the jaundice!

But let us suppose that the candidate has passed her physical examination with flying colors; that her back is strong; that her feet have not the slightest tendency to fallen arch; that she can eat stewed horse without a regretful pang; that she sleeps like the traditional top at night, and rises from her slumbers fresh as the traditional daisy. There are still other natural qualifications to reckon with: She must be able to subordinate herself to the will of others, to take orders, to take hard, disagreeable, and often what she may consider unjust orders from her superiors without opening her mouth to complain.

In the first year of the war the hospitals were nearly swamped by the sudden rush into them of grand ladies who were naught but little Miss Greenhorns in more arrogant guise. These women had not the faintest notion of subordination, or of the mental and spiritual discipline involved in nursing. Their conception, in a word, was the unreal conception of Miss Greenhorn. They, too, were devotees of the Florence-Nightingale-Mary-Pickford canned brand of dream. They had not left their beautifully appointed homes to carry slops, et cetera, but to nurse the gallant British and French lads! And for a time doctors and nurses were driven almost to insanity under the double pressure of caring for the wounded, and training—or quietly assassinating and smug-

gling down a well some dark night!—these ignorant ladies who descended on the hospitals like an Egyptian plague. Nor were all of the untrained, emotional incompetents of English origin. America sent her quota—women who from infancy had never obeyed anything outside of their own vagrant fancies, who were congenitally incapable of sinking their own personalities and becoming privates for the good of the cause. They wanted to be colonels at the very least or they wouldn't play, and a field-marshal's baton was even more to their taste. Boss was the middle name of every one of them. They had elephantiasis of the mind. Such a person in the minor position of nurse's aid can disrupt the entire ward of a hospital, which, more than any other branch of service, resembles the army in its authorities, its hierarchies and gradations of rank, and the severe monotony of the daily routine.

For a time there was such a Great Person in our ward at the American Ambulance, the sort who "my-good-man's" the soldiers. As for the rest, she blandly did what she pleased, and set the nerves of all of us on edge in consequence. For what she didn't please to do, we had to, you see!

One afternoon the head nurse said to her:

"Mrs. X, will you disinfect that bed?" And it was none the less a command even though it was issued mildly in the interrogative form.

Mrs. X responded in her best drawing-room drawl:

"Oh, my deah Miss C., I am so sorry! But it is my tea time! And besides, really that is not my bed, you know!" With which piece of insolence she drifted languidly off to tea.

"What am I to do with her?" exclaimed the head nurse despairingly to the ward doctor, who had witnessed the insubordination.

"Shoot her at sunrise," he suggested jovially. "This is a military organization. Shoot her at sunrise, and put over her grave: 'Here lies a deserter. Shot for refusing to obey a superior officer in action.'"

Of course he was right. That is precisely what should have been done to her. And I would have joined the firing squad with pleasure—for I had to disinfect that bed!

To be strong, healthy, adaptable, able to sink one's identity and to take orders—these are some of the natural qualifications of a successful volunteer aid. In addition she must be prepared for disagreeable tasks. The sight of blood, of poor fellows smashed to pieces, the hideous stench of gangrenous wounds, the screams of the dressing hour—these are the inevitable concomitants of a surgical ward in war-mangled Europe to-day, and are sufficiently disagreeable. But these are not what I mean. I mean the monotonous, prosaic, inglorious tasks that everybody loathes but somebody has to perform. And that somebody, eleven cases out of ten, is the nurse's

volunteer aid. For you have not read thus far without discovering that the position of an auxiliary resembles closely that of a printer's devil. Not his the high responsibility of getting out the paper or deciding the politics of the editorial page; his not to reason why, his but to be on the living, red-hot jump every second of the time or get sacked by his irate boss. In one respect, however, the printer's devil has the haul over the nurse's assistant, for he receives a weekly envelope, while she labors for love.

As a specimen of these monotonous tasks, an English volunteer aid confessed to me that for two months in an English base hospital, three miles behind the lines, she did nothing all day save carry heavily loaded trays of food from the diet kitchen to a certain table in the corridor. Day after day, from eight in the morning until seven at night, back and forth, back and forth, remote, solitary, with aching shoulders, this plucky young private drudged. Never a wounded soldier did she see. At times the hospital shook under German bombardment; but so far as romance and illusion were concerned, she might as well have been a slavey in a twilight basement restaurant beneath the dull roar of the Sixth-Avenue elevated trains. Another young woman told me that for six weeks she carried nothing but bedpans. And at the American Ambulance, the *auxiliaire* who roomed next to me had a job of which I did not envy her the possession. Every evening she used to offer

to trade it in even barter for mine. And every evening I refused to take a cowardly advantage of her generosity. The position which my friend was so generous with was up in the operating room. And it was her particular duty to carry off the amputated members in a basket.

The points thus far in the natural qualifications of a nurse's aid are health, resiliency, ability to take orders and to stick at mean, disagreeable jobs. Let us add a final one that is really the keystone of the entire arch. For without it the others are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Nor is it acquirable: it is a grace, a gift. Some successful doctors and nurses possess it to a high degree; others, lacking it, turn into dried-up turnips. There was a certain young surgeon in the hospital who undoubtedly possessed this qualification. Whether he was an expert technician I do not know, for he left the hospital before I arrived and it was only the soldiers' memory of him, the reflected echo of his personality, that I received. But that was sufficient. They loved him. "Ah, mees," they would exclaim, "do you know Docteur James d'Amérique? *Non?*" And they made me feel that not to have known him was a profound personal loss. "Ah, how he was kind! How he was good!" they would murmur fondly, and they would drag forth a tiny snapshot of him for me to look at, and laugh with delight at beholding his face. "See, mees! Here he is! Aha! Bonjour, Docteur James!"

They wished me to share with them the fragrance of that memory. One could not ask for a better epitaph than the tribute paid by these *poilus* to the unknown Docteur James d'Amérique! Another did not possess this gift. Brusque, impatient of address, he would pull away the gauze sticking to an infected wound with an abruptness that invariably raised a howl; and exclamations of "*Brutal!*" "*Imbécile!*" "*Sale cochon!*" followed his ministrations down the ward. "Oh, shut up! Shut up! Shut up!" the doctor would retort in English. Now the soldiers did not know exactly what "Shut up" signified; without doubt in their minds it was some extremely naughty English profanity. But they had their revenge. They nicknamed him "Docteur Shut Up." That was his epitaph.

A nurse who failed in this one respect they dubbed the old *mitrailleuse*. I have seen them sham sleep when she approached their bedsides for a chat. There was one, however, whom they loved. She was a slim, gold-haired Scotch miss, not much higher than the bedposts, but a grenadier for all that, and the quality I am speaking about rayed out from her in an almost visible aura. Not that she was "soft" or easy with the men. On the contrary, she cracked a whip over them and made them walk a chalk line of discipline, which they did with an open, unabashed delight in her. They would feign all sorts of ailments to lure her to their bed for a chat and massage.

"I suffer bad here, mees!" they would begin. "No, not there—higher up. No, *chère* mees, not there. No—yes! *Voilà! Parfaitement! A-ah! Mais, continuez, continuez!*" And not a thing the matter with the frauds! But they sunned themselves in her presence and all but fought for her smiles. That little Scotch miss had a way with her. Moreover, she loved her job. She loved it from the ground up, over and under and beyond and through. She loved it in all of its aspects and ramifications; she loved it in all the hours. She had the faculty, the gift I have been attempting to describe. She had a vocation. And unless one possesses in some degree this natural delight in humanity, in sick, diseased and often dirty humanity, the hour soon strikes when nursing begins to pall.

Thus far I have dealt only with the natural qualifications that a young woman should possess if she desires to do volunteer nursing in this war. All those who, after searching their inmost hearts with sincerity, cannot pass on the above-mentioned points with an all-round grade of at least seventy-five per cent, need waste no further time on this article. They may get out of the procession right now and go round next door and sign in for canteen cooking, or join the hoe brigade. Step lively, please!

At the present moment there does not exist in the Red Cross organization any course of instruction that has for its direct and primary object the train-

ing of volunteer nurses' aids for work in surgical hospitals here or abroad. There does not exist in the Red Cross curriculum, as it is now constituted, any course that is adequate for the present crisis. The teaching manuals are the same that were in use before the war, unrevised, unchanged. They were not written with war in mind. Their purpose and goal is not our purpose and goal. And, as the textbooks have remained unaltered, it is inevitable that the various courses of instruction based upon them should be more or less beside the point, congested with material that is useless or irrelevant, and barren of certain fundamental facts which every volunteer aid should know. Sometimes when these lessons are given by nurses or doctors who have seen actual war service they are of more value, but these are exceptional, random cases; and in general the courses, instead of hitting the bull's-eye of to-day's grim necessity, are faced off in another direction and shooting at an imaginary mark.

There are four courses of instruction in the Red Cross curriculum that have a bearing, more or less indirect, on the subject of volunteer nursing in surgical hospitals during the present war. Let us glance at each in turn.

Most popular of all is the course in First Aid. This is the course that nearly every woman in the land flew at and swallowed down whole at the outset of the European conflict, and, it is safe to say, with

very slight benefit. This is not surprising, for First Aid was not the proper choice. To teach nursing is not its object. The punishment, so to speak, does not fit the crime. Almost purely educational in character, it is designed for the accidents and emergencies of our ante-bellum, peaceful past rather than for the precise, up-to-the-minute scientific requirements of our belligerent present.

And from the point of view of the nurse's assistant there are entire chapters that should be ruthlessly scrapped. Methods of resuscitating a drowning man; cures for snake bite; the way to tell an intoxicated gentleman from one who has merely fallen down in the street in a fit—these matters are interesting and valuable in their place; but their place is not in a manual used to instruct in the art of nursing under present conditions. It would seem advisable that the First-Aid manual be taken in hand by some eminent surgeon who has seen war-hospital service during the present year—for example, Dr. George W. Crile, head of the Cleveland Hospital Unit, that was recently ordered to France—and blue-penciled unsparingly with actual conditions in mind. The residue, plus a chapter on the recent discoveries and improved methods in caring for wounds, such as the treatment of burns from liquid gas, and the Carrel-Dakin system of antiseptic irrigation of infected wounds, to mention but two examples, would form an invaluable nucleus of instruction.

The second course in the Red Cross curriculum is that known as Elementary Hygiene and Home Care of the Sick. "The primary object of this course," according to the pamphlet, "is to teach women personal and household hygiene in order that they may acquire habits of right living which will aid in the prevention of sickness and the upbuilding of a strong and vigorous people, and to give them simple instruction in the care of the sick of their own homes which will fit them to render intelligently such service as may be safely entrusted to them." Admirable three years ago in peace times, but not at all what we are after now. Here again, so far as the purpose of the volunteer nurse is concerned, the emphasis, as in First Aid, is on the wrong foot from the start-off. There are entire chapters that might be omitted with profit, such as the house, the care of the house and the laundry, the household medicine closet, the hygiene of infancy and childhood. They should be dropped, and a more thorough, intensive and leisurely training be given in actual conditions prevailing in war hospitals of to-day.

In addition to these courses there are two others of minor importance. One in Home Dietetics is entirely too elaborate for the simple requirements of the nurse's aid, who needs to know only the general food values and the compounding of invalids' drinks. Three or four lessons in connection with the nursing course should amply cover this field. The fourth

course, the Surgical Dressings, is practical but limited.

These are the popular courses given under the auspices of the Red Cross to-day. Each, taken by itself, has grave defects; and even when all four are combined there is such a ponderous dead weight of irrelevant material, pre-war nursing and medical junk, that for practical purposes it would seem better to throw them all out of the window and devise another course, a course compounded of the valuable elements of all four, but thorough, scientific, modern, and above all specifically adapted to the actual conditions of the present fight.

It may be argued that the necessary eliminations will be made by each individual. But to let the immature, embryo nurse decide what she will and what she won't eliminate is a dangerous business in practice. It would be all right in peacetime, when she does not have to try it out on the dog. But she might elect to eliminate the wrong detail, and then find herself in the quandary of Miss Greenhorn, with a human life hanging in the scales. For though in theory an auxiliary has no authority and no responsibility, in actual practice that is far from being the truth. There are hours, even days, in the absence of the nurse, when the entire care of the ward falls on the shoulders of the assistant, with the head nurse looking in at rare intervals. In textbooks untrained persons are not supposed to be in positions of responsi-

bility. In this or that emergency "Call the doctor!" or "Call the nurse!" they say. But suppose the doctor is up in the operating room, blocks away. Suppose the nurse is off duty. Suppose also that the nurses in the adjacent wards are down at lunch. For such precisely was the stage setting of a mishap that occurred in the jaw ward of the American Ambulance. The auxiliary was alone in the room. Suddenly, without warning, one of the jaw cases began to hemorrhage from the mouth and nostrils. Bright arterial blood spurted high as the ceiling and stained adjoining beds. In less than ten minutes the man was dead. What should the auxiliary have done? The event proved that in that particular case not a whole regiment of doctors could have saved the patient; but the responsibility was there. And it is for just such tight corners of actuality that a volunteer nurse should be prepared. And for such preparedness the teaching manuals and the lectures based upon them should deal, not with the diffuse and general matters of health, but exclusively and incisively with the realities of the present crisis. In addition, it should be noted that the Red Cross, in connection with its nursing course, "hopes that a limited number of hours of practical experience will be provided by the base hospitals"; but such practical experience is not deemed essential to a certificate.

Aside from these courses, there is a course given by the Young Women's Christian Association of New

York City, which for practical purposes covers the requirements of the present situation in an almost ideal fashion. It is, in fact, the most admirable course of instruction on the market—scientific, modern, intensive, complete. It is called the Trained Attendant Course, and is given by Johns Hopkins nurses of the highest standards of excellence, who are trained teachers as well. The course covers eleven weeks of daily instruction and practice, with an obligatory companion course in invalid cookery.

With the natural and technical qualifications of the volunteer nurse's aid thus disposed of, one may look about and query where suitable material is to be found. The answer is at hand: In the colleges. College women of the two upper classes form a compact body, already listed, easy to mobilize. Young, supple, adaptable, mentally and physically fit, with a background of discipline behind them, they are excellent instruments for the purpose. Sharpen them to a point by an adequate course of instruction, and three months should produce a corps of workers sufficient for a year. These might then be registered and called upon at need.

It is a feature of the present disaster that no one can gauge the future. One man's guess is as good as another's. It is safe to say that two years ago no one foresaw that to-day the United States would be in the arena as the protagonist of democracy. Nor can anyone predict with assurance what the next two

years will hold: Whether we shall have a big expeditionary force in France; whether by that time we may not be fighting on our own soil; or whether the whole infernal business may not burst like a bubble before the month is out. But this much seems certain—American surgery and American hospitals are counted the best in the world both in the preventive and in the follow-up field. And since our entry into the war the governments of the United States, Great Britain and France have had under consideration a proposition for placing the entire French ambulance service, and later on the entire British ambulance service, under the United States army medical corps.

So there you are, dear procession, right up against your job! I hope you like its dimensions. As the darky says, "You done chawed off a mouthful!" And that is all for this time, except—God bless you, girls! Go to it! And remember, it's our own men this time!

THE CHILDREN OF THE WAR ZONE

"GUARD well the little ones to-day, Marthe. Don't let them out of sight or play too far from home. You know Emile hates to wear his gas mask. He tears it off and hides it, the naughty rogue, soon as the back is turned. There! Listen! It has commenced again—the bombardment!"

Marthe's mother, a short, stocky French peasant with a heavy, weather-roughened face and deep-blue eyes, held up her hand for attention; and Marthe, a slim gypsy child of seven, dirty and unkempt, with great gleaming black eyes and an uncombed mat of curly black hair, cocked an indifferent ear to listen; in fact, she was somewhat scornful of her mother's continued terror of that distant muffled roar. Heard thus, ten kilometers or more away, it was not unlike the shock of a heavy surf breaking on a rocky coast. For three years now Marthe had heard that sound. She had heard it near at hand when a big shell had exploded bang! right on top of her own house and knocked all one side out open to the sky—after which they had dragged the furniture downstairs and lived

in the cellar; she had heard it farther off when *bing!* *bang!* the spire of the old mossy stone church across the way had crashed down into the street and all of the saints save only Mother Mary and her little Son had tumbled, face down, from their niches; she had heard it the last thing at night when she went to sleep, and she had risen to its sound in the morning.

And familiarity had bred contempt. It was part of the everyday tissue of her life, common as the Boches' avions, which went sailing high overhead in the sky, tiny as minute dragon flies, and disappeared into fleecy clouds. For Marthe and her mother lived in a little village in the war zone, just in front of a line of concealed French batteries which the enemy had long been striving to demolish.

And when the Boches became enraged at their failure in locating the French batteries which roared nightly defiance they would deliberately turn their guns upon the defenseless civilian villages in between, abandoned by all save a few old people and poor families who had nowhere else to go; and perhaps they would kill an old woman or mangle a child playing in the deserted streets; after which sport, encouraged and refreshed, they would go after the French batteries again. Jean, a village boy, had explained all this to Marthe. His entire family had been killed in an explosion, and since then he had turned into a wild, moody character, following the army or roaming the countryside.

Marthe listened to the distant struggle of artillery and then she shrugged her shoulders and said calmly: "It is not near. To-day it is not as near as yesterday. I do not think they will bother us any more. For yesterday Jean and I went through the village and counted, and every single house had been hit. They have finished with us, *maman*! If the guns do not come after us this afternoon may I take Emile and gather flowers for the shrines?"

Her mother shook her head. The frugal breakfast of soup over she was fastening on her apron of coarse ticking to go to work in her field. It was for the sake of that precious plot of five hectares of wheat that she had stayed on in the village, taking fearsome chances, after the enemy had started to gas the entire district and the French orders of evacuation had come.

"You would let little Emile be gassed," she murmured reproachfully, "while you run off to gather flowers!"

"*Zut!* They have not gassed us for ten days. And it is cold down here, *maman*. Even in the middle of the day it is cold—and dark. Emile sneezes all the time. And he is getting as white as plaster."

Her mother sighed. "Very well," she consented grudgingly, "you may go. But for an hour only. I do not like it, though. Tie Emile's mask behind his back where he cannot find it."

"Yes, *maman*. But they are not going to gas us any more. Jean said so."

"That Jean!" cried her mother angrily. "What does he know about it? Even the good God Himself does not know any more what they will do! And I will not have you playing with that scamp, that *jeune sauvage*. He is not respectable. Chasing all over the country! Following the soldiers! *Hélas!* What is our poor country coming to? A fine crop of young vagabonds we shall have after the war!"

She thrust into her pocket a hunk of dark sour bread and a fragment of cheese, kissed Emile and Marthe, caught up from the mattress a pallid, somber-eyed girl baby, and went out to the field.

Left to herself, Marthe took Emile, climbed the few steps leading up from her cave home and sat watching the German aëroplanes. They passed, singly or in groups, frequently. The thin drone of their motors coming from the north could be heard long before even Marthe's keen eyes could pick out the black speck far up in the pale-blue ether. The thunder of artillery had grown fainter and died away. Certainly Jean was right. What was the fun of shooting at houses that were already knocked down?

That afternoon, with Emile clinging to her fingers and every now and then looking up with a delighted smile into her eyes, Marthe led the way to the ruined church. From the leather belt which secured the boy's diminutive black cotton apron dangled the gas



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REFUGEES FROM THE GASED DISTRICTS

mask. According to orders Marthe had tied it behind his back, and at every step it bobbed up and down like an absurd little antiquated bustle. The sun shone brilliantly. It was an ideal day in which to be out of the cellar. Arrived at the church, with its small inclosed garden of silent inhabitants, Marthe ensconced Emile, always obedient, smiling and tender, upon a grave close under the wall of the old stone chapel, and then rambled off to gather bouquets for the shrines.

How long she remained away, how far she wandered, she did not know; but when she returned little Emile had mysteriously vanished. In her absence the old stone church had altered also. One entire side had fallen out and lay prone, a chaos of tumbled broken granite, upon the mossy ground. And now Marthe recalled having heard an explosion, but so accustomed were her ears to the sound that at the time she had but vaguely marked it. That accounted for the church certainly.

But Emile—where was Emile, obedient, tender little Emile? She ran about, peering behind grave-stones, calling shrilly, and at length, smitten by a nameless anguish of horror, scared in every atom of her small being without knowing why, she fled, sobbing wildly, to her mother and poured out her story.

That night there was a hurried exodus. Marthe's mother, broken by the death of her small son—for if his disappearance was a mystery to the girl it was

not to her mother after one glance at the high-piled broken granite—decided to give up her field; but it was like wrenching her heart out of her body. Jean, chancing by that way at dusk, offered his company as far as the next village, for Marthe's mother, a true peasant, had never in her life traveled more than a dozen kilometers from her own doorstep, and knew less of the outside world than she knew of heaven. So Jean had taken charge. And now he walked beside the refugees, carrying a huge blanketful of their possessions strapped across his shoulders and holding by the hand Marthe, who still wept bitterly at the thought of abandoning her little Emile to the cold and the dark of the deserted churchyard. She pictured him sobbing and stumbling among the mossy stones, and calling in sweet, plaintive tones for his sister. That the fall of the church wall had anything to do with the vanishing of Emile did not once enter her head. The two were separate catastrophes—the one, familiar, ordinary; the other, mystifying, terrible. She, too, bore a sack of household goods upon her back, and from her free hand dangled a small, battered bird cage.

Behind them trudged Marthe's mother, harnessed to the shafts of a dump cart piled high with mattresses and bedding, and bearing on top the small slumbering Georgette, cozy and warm, nested deep in pillows. Since viewing the fallen wreck of the church not one sound had the mother uttered. If she had

marked Jean's opportune appearance on the scene she did not betray any sign of his presence. And now she plodded forward, shoulders bent, gripping the shafts, dry-eyed, stolid, mute. What were her thoughts upon that twilight road?

Ahead of her Marthe and Jean held low-voiced conversation as to the probable whereabouts of Emile. The boy, who upon hearing her tale had instantly divined the truth, declared it was his opinion that the sacred Mother Marie, looking out through the window from her shrine in the church, had seen Emile, and noting what a gentle and gay little kid he was had borrowed him for a time to play in the sky with her own small Son, who without doubt must be horribly bored among all those solemn, grown-up saints and angels. And this idea of the *jeune sauvage*, the vagabond of the fields, comforted Marthe greatly.

In time they arrived at a village which thus far had escaped shelling. A shelter was found for them. And for a month the peasant mother remained in her new, strange surroundings. But her heart was so heavy that she could not sleep or eat or speak. She suffered as an animal suffers, dumbly. A stranger would have called her sullen—a clod. For hours on end she sat in the same chair, heavy, immobile, and stared out upon a field of grain and poppies and thought of her own plot lying untended in the sun. And finally the tug of the soil became too strong. She returned.

Established once more in the damp cellar of their wrecked home she became herself again, and the first night she chatted volubly with Marthe, to whom she had scarcely addressed a word since their flight; she even sang as she hushed the small Georgette to sleep.

"Listen, *petite!*" she said to Marthe after supper. "I am going down the street a moment to see Madame Barrois. She tends the field next mine. Perhaps also I can get some goat's milk for the *bébé*. *Ne bouge pas! Sois sage—hein?*". And Marthe had promised soberly not to budge and to be good. She felt lonely the first night, and she wished that Mother Marie would see fit to return Emile. There was such a thing as keeping a borrowed article too long!

Half an hour later her mother burst into the cellar, tears upon her cheek and a strange light in her eye. In her arms she bore a child who bit and wailed and kicked and screamed without cessation: "*Maman! Maman! Maman!*"

"*Ca y est! Tais-toi, mon petit gosse!*" (Enough! Enough! Keep still, my little boy!) murmured Marthe's mother, pressing the small head close to her bosom. "*Thy maman is gone, pauvre enfant!*"

She placed the sobbing child in Marthe's arms. "Listen to me," she said. "Emile was taken from us——"

"I know. The Mother Marie borrowed him to play with the infant Jesus. Jean said so."

"Very good. For once that Jean was not so far off. And now the good Mother Marie has given us this poor little one to nourish in Emile's stead."

To Marthe this exchange seemed only simple justice and she did not trouble her head with the details of the transaction. Nor did her mother explain that on arriving at the dugout of her friend she had knocked repeatedly without receiving a response and was on the point of leaving when from out of the darkness behind the door had sounded a shrill, angry, sobbing little voice: "*Maman! Maman! J'ai froid! J'ai froid!*"

Hastily Marthe's mother forced the door, made a light, and discovered her friend lying upon the floor, the victim of a shell, and the child beating the still, inanimate figure with his puny fists and crying: "*Maman! Wake up! I'm cold!*"

After this Marthe's mother tended her own and her neighbor's field, and Marthe joyfully tended little Emile's substitute.

One afternoon shortly afterward she took her new acquisition out to wash him in the canal and see what kind of bargain Mother Marie had made with her anyhow. And while she was thus employed, down on her knees scrubbing absorbedly, there drew up quietly behind her a large, military-gray automobile, from which two men descended. It was, in fact, Prefect Mirman with an American friend. M. Mirman was prefect of the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle,

a portion of the country bordering on Alsace, which included a large area of the battling frontier of France. The prefect himself held a position comparable in importance to the governorship of New York, and he had in his heart a deep overflowing love for his suffering people which resembled that of Lincoln's.

But Marthe could not know that. She sprang to her feet, terribly startled, staring behind the men at the big, gray, snorting, quivering, smoking beast—the first she had ever laid eyes on—and instinctively threw her new little brother behind her. The prefect, reading her intention of flight, laid a restraining grasp on her shoulders. Marthe faced him, pale, hostile, her pupils steadily enlarging.

"Poor unfortunates!" said the American. "Why are they permitted to remain?"

The prefect smiled slightly. "They are not. They stay without permission. It is impossible for you Americans, who are always traveling about, to conceive the love, the passion with which our poor people cling to the nourishing soil. Transplant them rudely, scientifically as you may say, and they pine, they die. That is the simple truth. Well, what are we to do? For example, take this situation. All throughout this northern-frontier district the civilian population was ordered to evacuate when the enemy started its deliberate bombarding and gassing of defenseless open towns.

"Some of these little villages lie directly in the line of attack. It is conceivable that, given a temporary reverse of our army, they might fall into Prussian hands. And should that unfortunate event occur I do not want left in those villages any women, any young maids, any half-grown lads or any infants! The majority of the population, of course, get out instantly when the evacuation orders come. But there is always left a residue of those who cannot or will not go, poor people in villages or farmers who have never traveled farther than twenty kilometers in their lives, and whom it is as hard to uproot, even in this time of stress, as it is to uproot a hardy old tree. Simply they prefer to remain here and take their chances. But that must not be!

"So for the past two months, since the evacuation orders became effective, I have driven from one end to another of my department, searching out those who remain behind. And I explain, I beg, I urge, I entreat. I promise that they shall not go far from home; that their children shall remain with them; that as soon as it is safe they shall return; and if they have crops in the ground they may go certain days to tend them, leaving the children in safety. It has defects, of course, this plan of mine, for often our shelters are bombed, but just at present it is the best I can do."

And here the prefect, one of the most romantic and truly great figures in France, looked down at the

reluctant young person he had been holding fast while he discoursed, and said: "Well, little mother! How goes it, eh?"

Silence. Marthe simply stared at him, clutching tightly behind her the substitute Emile, naked save for a pair of diminutive trousers.

"Where is *maman*?"

Silence.

"Who is that you are hiding behind you?"

"Nobody. There's nobody behind me!" At this mendacious statement the prefect, father of his district, laughed. "Ha! 'Tis a little angel then? I'm going to see!"

He bent over her shoulder. But Marthe, who had been edging out from under the restraining hand, suddenly whirled, caught up the boy, scudded to her cellar across the way, and shut and barricaded the door. She was not going to risk a second disappearance!

The prefect approached, knocked, and addressed gentle, persuasive words to the invisible occupants. There was no response.

"We shall have to wait," he said, returning to the automobile. "Of course we could use violence—but there's been enough of that!"

And wait they did for more than two hours, the prefect calm, patient, determined. In the interval he related some of his experiences as prefect in connection with the German capture of French towns

at the commencement of the war. That the iron had entered the soul of this strong, tender governor of his people was evident, for with all his manifold duties he had taken time to compile a book of officially vouched-for cases of outrages occurring within his own department, for the benefit of those who pooh-poohed the idea of German atrocities. The first sentence of that poignant little book reads: "*Voici un livre d'horreurs; c'est, hélas! un livre de vérité.*" (This is a book of horrors; it is, alas, a book of truth!)

And those Americans who hold that the Germans are really very fine fellows, but simply misled by their overlords, should have a confidential chat with Prefect Mirman, the great-hearted governor of that frontier section of France.

It was deep twilight before Marthe's mother returned from her work. With two fields under bombardment to tend instead of one, life was no joke. To her the prefect explained the object of his visit. Since the fathers of France were away fighting, he, the prefect, was trying to be father to all the children in his department, to watch over them, to keep them decent boys and girls, in church and in school, to teach them trades and safeguard them until their parents' return.

Marthe's mother listened, pondered, put a few practical questions. The place to which he would take them—it was far? No, close at hand; in effect,

just behind that hill. And her children, they would be with her? But surely! And she could return when necessary to care for her fields? The prefect gave her his word. Whereupon Marthe's mother, so sparing of emotion, suddenly burst into tears and consented.

Three days later saw the entire family transported to Toul and safely installed in a temporary barracks provided by Prefect Mirman. It was a big, bare, uncomfortable, insanitary affair, and it seemed as if all the young ragamuffins of France had been collected there in one sorry regiment. The story of Marthe might serve as a type for most. But there were some whose histories, written in their small peaked faces and sullen gaze, had a more sinister cast; some had lost an eye; some had lost a hand; some had lost parents; and most of them had lost their childhood gayety. Gathered up from miles along the frontier where the artillery fire was hottest, out of dank, dirty cellars or unspeakably foul dugouts and caves, living without air, baths, change of garments or the simplest sanitary arrangements, they were a dismal, pallid, vermin-infested, scarecrow little crew—and yet they were the budding hope of France, as nobody knew better than the prefect.

But what to do with them after he had got them together? It was a sore question. For what these small unfortunates needed beyond everything were baths, doctors, nurses, teachers, someone to teach

them to smile again—and always more and more baths. Out of the three hundred and fifty, twenty-one were babies under one year; many of them had contagious skin diseases; a few had tuberculosis; and all, sick and well, were crowded together without discrimination.

Food and shelter were all the prefect could be sure of, for these the French Government furnished, but more in the present stress it could not promise, for all the French doctors and nurses were already occupied with the war. And the worst of it was that more and more children and mothers would be arriving as the wave of battle swept toward other villages or wholesale gassing set in. It was a thoroughly bad piece of business all round—a kind of vicious circle with no visible outlet. But not for one moment did these difficulties stump the prefect of the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. He had rescued these children and got them together—that was his job. Now somebody had to take care of them; he couldn't, the French Government couldn't. Therefore—somebody else had to!

And it is exactly at this point, at that "somebody," that the American Red Cross enters the story. For in the acute and immediate need the prefect telegraphed for aid to a well-known American woman in Paris. She brought the telegram to Major Murphy, Commissioner for Europe of the American Red Cross, and he at once got into action. Within a few hours

eight workers were on their way to Toul—a doctor, a nurse, two aids, and women to take charge of the administration. At the same time there started a camionette loaded with clothing and food.

Thus began the first activity of the American Red Cross for the civil population of France—and it began very appropriately with the children.

When, one morning several weeks later, I visited this refugee center high up on a sunshiny hill, a general transformation had taken place. The children, numbering by this time about five hundred, with sixty mothers, had been moved into a newly constructed barracks of brick and cement furnished by the French Government, which also supplied heat, light, rations, cooks, unskilled labor and camion service for transportation. This plant, in its bare elements, was then turned over to the American Red Cross to supplement and run as it pleased. And when I arrived the American administration was in full swing. To me the children looked surprisingly well and happy—almost too happy, in fact, in view of their grim past! And I remarked upon this fact to the director.

“Well,” he laughed, “if you are after local color you should have seen them—and smelled them!—when we first took hold. The very first thing we did was to establish louse clinics—‘de-lousing’ is the technical term. Don’t shudder! They’re about clean now, but in the beginning we had some horrible little heads. The soldiers in the winter trenches had noth-

ing on those children in the way of vermin and filth. And at the same time we inaugurated the good old American institution of shower baths."

"And what did the mothers think of these?"

The doctor chuckled. "Scandalous! Immoral! Indelicate! Designed to murder their poor children outright! Some of these peasant women, you know, have never taken a bath in the altogether in their lives. They still continue the customs handed down to them since the time of Louis XI. They bathe little boys in their trousers—put 'em in the tub with their trousers on; indelicate to remove 'em, you see! They bathe little girls with their chemises on. And babies they don't bathe at all. Yes, the shower bath was a novelty. But I may add that it was a novelty which took with the children from the start. Now they fight for a chance at it!

"Come here, Marthe, and say '*Bonjour*' to the lady." He caught by the hand a passing little girl with great bright dark eyes and dark curls neatly twined. Beside her trotted a small boy, decked in his Sunday best. Thus I had my introduction to Marthe and the substitute brother whom the Mother Marie had sent down to replace the borrowed Emile.

"She is never without that boy," continued the director. "She seems to be afraid somebody is going to steal him." And then he told me her story, narrated above. "Here is her mother," he added as a woman approached along the path. "She has walked

all the way from her home to spend a few days with her children. These peasant mothers come and go as they will; they visit with us a few days and then return to their fields. *Bonjour, madame,*" he said, turning to her. "How goes that crop of wheat?"

"Not bad, monsieur. But yesterday—what a misfortune! An *obus* fell right in the middle of the field where the grain is highest and dug a crater wide as this." She extended her two arms. "*Sale brute!*" (Dirty brute!) "*Grâce à Dieu!* I was off in another corner of the field."

"You are very courageous," I said, "to work like that for your children in those bombarded fields."

"But no! But no! It is not for the infants. It is that the soldiers of France may have food."

"There you are!" exclaimed the director in English. "That's what they all say—and just as unself-consciously. They don't know what a magnificent piece of work they're pulling off!"

At this moment Marthe interrupted to show me her sewing and the mother passed on to her baby, the little Georgette. Later I saw this tiny, woeful creature, born in a cellar, under sound of heavy guns. Frail, transparent, pale as a snowdrop, she lay in her mother's arms. Not once in her two years had she been seen to smile. I did not blame her. Such a world was not worth smiling on! She showed a rare judgment beyond her age. Nevertheless, for five minutes I held her in my arms, hating the Germans, and

trying by all arts to bring a flash of mirth to that solemn, drooping little mouth. Vain enterprise. I might as well have tried to make the Sphinx laugh.

After that, accompanied by the director, I made a tour of the buildings, built after the usual fashion of military cantonments, in the form of a hollow square. Everything was scrupulously clean, the floors scrubbed, the windows flung wide open, and fresh sunshine flooded the dormitories, where the mothers sat chatting together, their babies at their breasts.

"This beats caves as a summer resort!" I said.

The director nodded rather grimly. In company with M. Mirman he had made rescues from some of those caves.

"And we're going to beat them still more before we're through. Here in this small settlement we are trying to achieve a model community. Already we have a clinic, an infirmary, a hospital of eighty beds, a kindergarten, a church, schools, a store, a recreation teacher—in short, a welfare center for children as scientific and humane as anything to be found in America. But that is not enough. Compared with the need this one single unit is only a drop in the bucket. And so we are planning to make Toul a kind of nucleus from which we shall ray out in all directions. Already we have a traveling dispensary starting from this point, with a doctor and nurse, which visits through twenty-five villages, treating the chil-

dren in their homes and fetching back to the hospital the contagious and tubercular cases. Such a system keeps up the general health par in the areas visited and prevents the sudden spread of epidemics.

“At Nesle, a town in the devastated district, we have established another unit—a small hospital and another automobile dispensary which carries aid to the outlying districts. In that region, of course, the problem is somewhat different from our own, because the Germans, having retreated, the children do not need to be collected in one place to protect them from gassing or bombing. They remain in their homes—if one can call homes those ruined and burned shells, despoiled of every stick of furniture, every kitchen utensil, and even the orchards cut down and the wells defiled!—and we go to them. We go to them with our traveling clinics in an ambulance containing a full outfit of medical stores—and a bath! We carry the makings of that bath right along with us on the floor of the machine—a tub, tubing, a spray and a pumping apparatus. And when we arrive at a home where a child needs a clean-up we heat water in the kitchen, stick the small victim into the tub—without trousers or chemise, you bet!—and we bathe it after the rules laid down by the Greek nymph Arethusa, who lived in a fountain and who, according to the Limerick, used to wash, *sans* mackintosh—b’gosh, *sans* anything!

“It is the simple, serious truth that baths are the

greatest hygienic need of these children at the present time; and by bringing baths into their homes we are helping to restore the health of the entire district. So successful have been our efforts at Toul and Nesle that the French authorities have earnestly requested us to broaden our scope and establish centers in other needy districts. And this is what we are doing as fast as we can. Eventually we intend to have a chain of centers, linked together by automobile dispensaries, strung along that whole northern frontier just behind the battle lines, in order to care for the thousands of children who, no less than the men in the trenches, are giving their lives in this war.

“As the situation stands to-day France is burning her candle at both ends; she is at one and the same time losing her men and her children. With our American soldiers once in the trenches we are going to check the colossal loss of man power; and in the interval until our fellows arrive, with our hospitals, our clinics, our traveling dispensaries and our schools we are doing our best to check the loss of her child power. This type of scientific social work is the sort of thing America excels in; for the last ten years we’ve gone in hard for it. I suppose we’ve got a flair for it, just as the French have for pure science. Anyhow, as a nation we can do that particular job better than anybody else on earth. And for the American Red Cross to throw into the breach our

finely trained child specialists is to render France in this hour an inestimable benefit."

This sketches the effort of the Red Cross for the children of the war zone in free France. But not all of France is "free," as the French themselves touchingly call it. And that portion of it which still is not free, the immensely rich mining and manufacturing district under German rule, has also its child problem. That problem the Germans have dealt with in their characteristic brutal fashion. They are simply sweeping out of the country, as with a gigantic broom, all these small, food-consuming nonproducers. Across the Northern Swiss frontier they are being thrust into France at the rate of nearly five hundred a day—more than ten thousand a month! Here is a child problem with a vengeance! Of course it is not the children alone who are being swept out, but all the nonproducing inhabitants. If they can't work—*heraus mit 'em!* Dump the refuse out the back door into France. Shift the food burden of all those hundreds of thousands of useless inhabitants onto the enemy. From a purely materialistic point of view this wholesale act of dispossession is a fine move—and France is glad to have her people back at any price! Also, she has food to burn!

Evian-les-Bains is the gate of entry for these exiles—*rapatriés* the French call them—and accordingly to Evian I went. It is a beautiful, quaint little town on Lake Geneva, high, Alp-encircled, and with an air

like iced champagne. Formerly a fashionable watering place, it has now been transformed into a kind of Ellis Island receiving station for the refugees, who pour in by trainloads, twenty thousand a month.

Here daily is to be witnessed one of the most tragic processions that history has ever yet offered to man—a nation on the march! But a nation dispossessed, broken and diseased, old men and old women and mothers with children—the past and the future generations—with the present generation strikingly absent! For the young men are held to work the mines and the factories, and the young women are held—but even in France one rarely speaks of that phase of the subject, which is the blackest of all black pages of German occupation. What “efficient” explanation is Germany going to offer, at the big post-bellum tribunal of the nations, for the girls sent into white slavery in the Ardennes?

Three years have elapsed since the Germans conquered the northern part of France, and since then the inhabitants have lived in a state of complete isolation, cut off from news of their families in free France, sons and husbands who fled before the invaders; cut off also from any reliable information concerning the war or the great outer world. Not a single letter are they permitted to send or receive. This incredible act of mental cruelty I did not believe until I arrived in Evian, questioned the refugees themselves and the authorities, and entered the fam-

ous letter room, where hundreds of thousands of letters are filed, often months ahead of time, awaiting the possible return of some exile relative.

Newspapers these people have, to be sure, but they are journals printed by the Germans in French, ostensibly to give current events, but actually to spread German propaganda and despair. I glanced through some of these papers. According to them England is speedily starving to death; Russia is about to conclude a separate peace; France has been bled white; America is a noisy four-flusher—and *Deutschland* is *über alles!* Under ordinary conditions such a crude tissue of lies would merit only a burst of scornful laughter; but given a captured civilian population as isolated from their loved ones as if they were ghosts, a prey to constant anxiety concerning the welfare of France, and this daily insidious attack upon a morale already enfeebled by adversity is bound to have a damaging effect.

Of these journals the *Gazette des Ardennes* is the most notorious.

The first evening I waited at the station I do not know exactly what I expected to see—but, anyhow, something that would rend the heartstrings. I forgot that this station represented to those pilgrims the end of a three-years' captivity; that every kilometer of the long, wearisome three-days' journey from Belgium, where they had been quarantined, brought them nearer letters, nearer a resumption of family

ties, nearer a tender welcome from free France.

It was cold. A light snow had fallen on the circle of mountains, and a chill wind blew up from the lake. The Red Cross ambulance drivers had backed their machines close to the platform to care for the sick and the old, and now they stood by the tracks, ready to lend a hand to the incoming crowd. I was in the mood of Antony: "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now!" when the refugee train pulled into the station; and to my surprise I saw flags bursting from every open window—the French Tricolor, the Stars and Stripes, Red Cross flags, handkerchiefs, bundles, any old thing—frantically waving a welcome from a thousand eager hands! Who said anybody was sad? Besides flags, the windows were crowded full of heads—happy, excited children, mothers holding up babies, and smiling, seamed old countenances wreathed in white hair. And from within the cars, above the noisy hubbub, ascended high and sweet the strains of the Marseillaise.

The train slowed to a dead stop. Suddenly an old man leaned far out of a window, waved both arms, and shouted fiercely: "*Vive la France! Vive——*" He broke off sharply, looked down into a face below him on the platform and queried in low, anxious tones: "Say, We are in France, *hein?*" What an indiscretion if he had yelled that in German territory!

"Yes, you are in France. But descend, *papa!*

Descend, *maman!* Allons, *mes enfants*, descendez, *s'il vous plait!*"

It was the cheerful voice of the Red Cross man, M. Barrois, himself a *rapatrié*, with a wife and six children left behind in Lille, who assisted daily at the detraining of the refugees.

"But these people are not sad!" I objected to M. Barrois, still full of surprise. "They do not even look tired. Are they always gay like this?"

"It's a lively crowd to-night," he replied soberly, "on account of so many children. But some days they do not have a word to say. And you must not be deceived by their surface gayety. The sadness is there, underneath, just the same. You'll find it if you stay."

He was right. The first evening I caught only the false glow of excitement of the returning pilgrims. But as I watched night after night the endless procession of those who passed I began to discriminate, and to note beneath the happy eagerness on those faces the deeper substructure of strain, of suffering so long endured that it had become a habit. And as the thousands marched before me, successive waves of exiles, always different and yet mysteriously the same in their look of subdued suffering, of strain, I had a fleeting realization of what France has borne in this war.

With such throngs pouring daily into this one small receiving station a very careful organization

has of necessity been evolved in order not to congest the transportation. The following is the order of each day: At the last station on the Swiss frontier French Red Cross nurses enter the train and tag the sick and aged. At Evian these are put into ambulances, the others walking the short distance to the Casino, where await them an ample hot supper, music, and a tender speech of welcome by the mayor of Evian. After which they register, receive their letters, pass a medical examination, and are assigned lodgings in the town.

The first night I waited to see the last *malade* and the last baby safely stowed inside before I climbed into the front seat with the ambulance driver. As we struck the open lake road an icy wind straight off Mont Blanc made me shiver. A soldier on permission clinging to the running board beside me turned up his collar, muttering: "This is worse than the trenches in the Vosges." He had come up to search for his refugee wife, from whom he had not heard in three years.

"But she might arrive any day!" he argued hopefully. "I will teach you something extraordinary," he continued. "A comrade of mine came up here looking for his wife; he had dreamed a dream about her. And what do you think—the very first woman who stepped off the train was she!

"I had another friend, whose wife had died in Lille leaving a little daughter of two, whom the father had

never seen. He did not even know what had become of her, for he could get no word. A *rapatrié* friend, who informed him of his wife's death, could give no news of the little maid. Nevertheless, he came to Evian hoping to find some trace. And each day at the station as the throng passed he stood quietly holding out in his hand what looked like a postal card. And whenever a little girl appeared he thrust that card under her nose. Absurd, eh? A fool, a lunatic, sticking a piece of cardboard into every child's face! But one day when he held it in front of a little maid she suddenly burst into tears and cried out: '*Maman! Maman!*' That postal card bore the picture of her mother. And that's the way he found his child!"

It was twilight when we arrived at the Casino, and already the place was packed. Seated at long tables the refugees had stowed their precious bundles beneath their feet and were falling upon supper with a will. Between the tables passed the women of Evian with tureens of steaming soup, huge platters of meat that the Germans would have bartered their very souls for, and great pitchers of hot milk and of wine. And how those children gobbled! And how their elders followed their example! The platters passed and repassed. Through the big double doors facing Switzerland gleamed Lake Geneva, dimly purple through the gloom. Overhead in the balcony the band began to tune up.

Suddenly all over the hall the lights flashed on strongly and the same instant the band burst into the stirring impetuous strains of Chasseurs Alpains! As that gay beloved air broke across the room an electric shock of emotion seemed to pass along the tables. Men leaped up, shouting "*Vive la France!*" Women began to weep softly. Handkerchiefs were out everywhere. Yes, the long blight of captivity, of isolation, was past forever! That tune proved it!

And it was just at this chosen moment that the mayor of Evian came forward to make his speech. It was brief, simple and touching, and at certain portions of it women bowed their heads on the table and sobbed aloud.

"My dear fellow citizens!" began the mayor. "At a moment when, after long and cruel trials, you step foot again upon the sacred soil of *la Patrie*, I come in the name of the city of Evian to address to you all a very cordial, a very warm and a very affectionate welcome.

"We know all that you have suffered. For many months convoys like yours have traversed our little village, and we have heard recounted each day the long martyrdom you have endured. We know that you have suffered cold and hunger; we know that your houses have been burned, that your rich harvests have been destroyed and the beautiful industrial region of the north has been systematically destroyed; and, what is most terrible of all, we know

that young daughters have been torn from the arms of their mothers and taken away to slavery in the Ardennes. And it is because we do know all this, dear fellow citizens, that we receive you to-day with all of our heart and with all of our soul!

"I said just now that you have suffered greatly, but your sufferings have not been alone physical; they have been also, and even above all, spiritual. You have suffered to be without news of those who are dear, and at not knowing exactly how things were going in free France. As for that which concerns the news of the war and of France I am going to tell you at once, in one word, that all you have read in *Le Bruxellois* and the *Gazette des Ardennes* is one tissue of lies, and that, thanks to the armies of France and her Allies, victory will finally crown our banners.

"And now, courage, my dear fellow citizens! Your long martyrdom is about to end. Soon you are going to hear, standing, our sacred hymn, which has not greeted your ears for so long a time, and meantime join me in an act of faith and hope in our well-beloved country, and shout with me: '*Vive la France immortelle!*' "

The shout that followed was a shout indeed!

In closing, the *Marseillaise* was chanted, and by now all the audience was frankly in tears. A Red Cross doctor standing beside me cleared his throat.

"I've seen this thing a dozen times," he observed, "and still I choke up every time!"

Supper over the *rapatriés* registered and passed to the rear to receive their letters. This letter room is a marvel of perfect arrangement. Here every inquiry from anxious relatives is received, sorted alphabetically, and a note of it filed on an index card as if it were a library book. Thus, when a refugee hands his registration card across the counter, all the girl standing behind has to do is to look him up in her index catalogue and see if he has any mail.

Ah, those long moments of suspense while the girl is looking up a name! Those hundreds of greedy, outstretched hands across the counter! Those faces, so schooled to endurance, twitching now with unconcealed excitement! How slow the girl is! "No, there is nothing for you." An outstretched hand drops from the counter. Those mutely borne disappointments are horrible.

Some of the tales of this famous letter room are harrowing, some humorous. There arrived one day in Evian a woman refugee, with four sons at the Front from whom she had not heard a single line in three years. Her excitement may be conceived. Were they all alive? Were some dead? Which? Impossible that all four should be preserved for three years. The thing was outside probability. For long months she had brooded over the chances, selected for death first one and then another of her sons. Perhaps all had been killed by this time, for she knew her sons were brave! There was her youngest in par-

ticular, a dashing daredevil in the Alpine Chasseurs—the pacemakers in every attack. Yes, undoubtedly he had gone! She must make up her mind to it. And so she did, and unmade it, a hundred times a day. When she arrived in Evian it was five in the afternoon, and before she stood at the mail counter, registry slip in hand, it was nine—four mortal hours of heart-piercing suspense, during which she had buried one, two, three, four of her sons, and resurrected them again in a passion of hope. And now she was going to know! Yes, there was a letter for madame—two letters. Blindly she got herself out of the throng. The next moment there was a loud cry and she fell face down in a dead swoon.

“And for two days,” continued the doctor who told me the incident, “she raved with acute dementia.”

“Poor soul!” I said. “All four were killed? Her intuition was right.”

“Not a bit of it,” laughed the doctor. “All four of ’em were not killed! All four were alive and kicking. And that was the very trouble. It was a chance, of course, in a million. And winning that chance in the great lottery was too much for her. She had steeled herself for disaster. The strong shock of joy was a knock-out blow! But in a few days she was up and speeding on the way to her sons.”

What the American Red Cross is doing for the children in this situation may be grouped under two heads: First, immediate, temporary aid; second, per-

manent work. Whatever the French Government wishes in the way of personnel, equipment, drivers, and so on, to meet an urgent relief need, the American Red Cross stands ready to deliver at an hour's notice. But—and this is important and not generally understood—the French themselves must first express the desire, extend the invitation for aid. We are the guests; they are the hosts. And it is not the policy to rush in, take over the whole French problem, willy-nilly, and begin to run things off on brisk American methods. France has her national pride, like ourselves; and it is her pride, even in this stress, to care for her own wherever she can. Such a course of procedure on the part of the Red Cross may mean a little more slowness at the outset; but it means a deeper and more sympathetic bond between the two nations in the end—and in the end it is not less successful than the crude head-on attack. Thus in the Evian problem the French struggled for months to care for the thousands of refugees, and with a pitifully scant nursing and medical staff accomplished marvels. Still, to make a complete medical examination of every incoming *rapatrié* with such a staff would need a day of a hundred hours. And without such medical attention contagious diseases and epidemics were bound to creep into France, which, in fact, they did.

When these defects were called to the attention of the French Government it at once frankly called

for American aid. The same week a dozen ambulances and drivers, in charge of an American *chef de service* who had won distinction before Verdun, were dispatched to assist in the transportation. In passing it should be said that the winter work of these Red Cross ambulance drivers upon the borders of that glacier lake, in an ice-box temperature, with a keen zero wind thrusting playful darts between the shoulder blades, deserves a special mention. It is not a spectacular service or, save for pneumonia microbes, especially dangerous. It is simply a plugging, monotonous grind in freezing isolation.

After the ambulances had been dispatched a group of medical specialists were sent out to study the problem on the ground and suggest plans of permanent value. The result of their examination was the establishment of a receiving hospital of one hundred beds in Evian to care for the sick; a second hospital in Lyons for the chronic cases; and still a third hospital on the Mediterranean for the tuberculosis patients.

In addition to the hospitals, a clinic has been established right in the Casino itself, so that no child leaves the building without a medical examination. And these two agencies, the inside clinic and the outside hospitals, render the situation, so far as the danger to the state is concerned, practically watertight. For the clinic catches the small, microbe-rid-

den victim and shoots him straight to the hospital, thus turning a secure lock upon the spread of disease. As is the case on the northern frontier, these children suffer chiefly from malnutrition, contagious skin diseases and tuberculosis. It has been estimated roughly that about ten per cent of the *rapatriés* need hospital attention each day, and about one-third of that ten per cent are tuberculous.

The hospital at Evian is as modern and complete in its child equipment as expert thought can achieve. At present there is a colony of about fifty workers on the ground. One phase of the hospital service, as the head nurse outlined it to me, is of especial educational value.

"All of our nurses' aids, our *auxiliaires*, are French refugee girls," she explained. "This means practically a training school for nurses. And when it is realized that the French nursing standards are as low as the French surgery standards are high the need for general instruction in this line becomes apparent. We shall teach these raw, untrained peasant girls simply the first principles of caring for the sick. But if we do no more than instill into them the fundamentals of cleanliness, convince them that all-over baths are not scandalous, that babies do not thrive on wine, that fresh air does not kill, that sheets should be changed slightly oftener than once a month, that pneumonia and tuberculous patients do not prosper in hermetically sealed rooms, and a few

other modern, common-sense maxims, I for one shall be very content!"

These hospitals for children, established in needy zones throughout all France as fast as may be, constitute one of the most effective and long-range pieces of work that the American Red Cross has undertaken, for they minister to the immediate want and at the same time strengthen permanently the general health tone of a nation. That the French appreciate our effort in this field is undoubted, and one of their statesmen has said that the impetus given by America to the conservation of child life in France is one of the most beneficial by-products of this great war.

A CANTEENER IN FRANCE

HOORAY! *Vive la belle France!* I'm going to France! I'm going to be a canteener! Maybe I shall go right up to the Front just behind the first-line trenches and be under shell fire and be bombed by boche avions and hear the *alerte* and have to scurry to *abris* and all that sort of thing. I don't know any of the details yet—nobody over here does—but anyhow I'm going! That's the chief thing.

I'm so excited and thrilled I scarcely know what I'm doing, but outwardly I try to keep poised and calm, for mamma has been disappearing at intervals into her handkerchief ever since she gave her consent; and as for papa, he doesn't say much; in fact, the dear old sport is quieter than ever—but I catch him looking at me, when he thinks I don't see, in a way that makes me realize I'm the only girl he's got down here below and that he'd never send me if he had a son to give. Not having a son and being a true-blue American with generations of fighting blood inside of him—for the man who said "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes!" was my father's great-

grandfather—he's figured it out that the best he can do is to send his girl instead. That's the ground of his consent. And mamma's a Daughter of the American Revolution, so that lets her out.

It was pure accident—or fate—which made me run into Edith on the street a week ago to-day and thus start the wheels of destiny.

"Come in and have some tea," she said after congratulating me on my engagement, which had just been announced, "and tell me all about it—and him. You deep little mouse—to pull this off right under everybody's nose and keep as secret as the grave! Who is he, anyhow?"

"He's Major B——, of the Fifty-blank Infantry. He's just received his majority and he's just twenty-nine."

"Major, eh? That's not so bad."

"And, oh, Edith, he's leaving for France sometime this month, and I—I don't know what to do!"

"What would you like to do?" asked Edie, laughing a little at my blushes.

"I'd like to go over there, too," I replied without hesitation, staring straight into her deep blue eyes. "It doesn't seem as if I could stand it—the long, long separation. Irregular letters. And when they go into action, not knowing, not hearing, maybe never hearing. Never. Just the silence!"

"You're in the same fix as a million other American women right now," replied Edith grimly.

"And you've got to stand it. That's our job."

"I know," I said heavily. "But it doesn't make your own toothache any better to know that there's an epidemic of toothache raging over the whole civilized world."

Edith sat looking at me with a smile deep down in her eyes. She has been married three years, the first of our class; and now she looks at the entire outside world with that same air of tender smiling abstraction.

"It's all part of the game," she said finally. "And we women must keep the flag flying. Jack"—Jack's her husband—"is going over next month. He doesn't have to, of course, being over the age limit. But he foresaw this two years ago, and went and prepared himself at Plattsburg. He wouldn't volunteer then on account of me and baby. But now the call has come it finds him ready. He feels the whole situation deeply. I'm glad."

"Oh, Edie, you—brick!" I breathed, squeezing her hand hard. I thought of her left alone with her child—and not any too much money either.

"Edie's all right," she murmured unsteadily, her blue eyes bright as diamonds. "Don't you fuss about her! But now about you—I have an idea. What can you do? Practically, I mean."

"I've had a six-months' course in the hospital——"

"They don't take anything but graduate nurses now,"

"——and I've had two years of domestic science and food values. Then last summer I operated a cafeteria in the suburbs for the Women's League—did all the buying and accounts myself. It was fun. In college I was head of the basket-ball team and the tramping club, and I've never been sick a day in my life."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-four."

"A bit young. However," said Edith briskly, rising, "I'll see what I can do. There's just a bare chance—but I'm not going to tell you beforehand, for fear we burst the bubble. Run home now. Stick round the telephone. There may be a long-distance call. Put a few things into a bag while you're waiting. Do you think you could go on to New York to-night?"

I suppose my eyes must have been as big round as saucers with excitement, for suddenly Edith bent right over and dropped a kiss on my cheek. "You darned little kid!" she whispered. "I know exactly how you feel. Now trot!"

I trotted—walking on air.

For the next two hours I hung round the landing where the telephone is, and finally settled down on the top stair.

"For goodness' sake, child!" cried mamma, stumbling over me as she came out of the sitting-room, "what on earth are you doing here, all bunched up in the dark?"

"I—I'm——"

Just then the telephone rang. I sprang to the receiver.

"Oh, I see!" said mamma, laughing as she went downstairs.

But she didn't.

Central got the long-distance line cleared and then over the wire there came a woman's clear, crisp, businesslike voice: "I wish to speak to Miss Carlotta Murray."

"This is she."

"Miss Murray, could you sail for France a week from Saturday?"

My heart gave a sort of big thrilly jerk and I had a sudden shock as if my nerves had got short-circuited.

"Ye-yes!" I gulped faintly.

"What? Speak louder."

"Yes!" I shouted into the mouthpiece, holding on to the wall for support. "Dee-lighted!"

"Very well. Be at our office at eleven to-morrow morning. You'd better come prepared to go straight on to Washington to arrange about your passes. Good-b——"

"Wait!" I cried excitedly. "Who is it speaking? I don't know who you are."

"Red Cross Headquarters. New York office. Good-by."

She hung up and left me gasping in the darkness

on the stair. Well, I was in deep over my head now; and so I found mamma and put it straight up to her: Would she give her consent if papa did? At first she refused up and down, but by six o'clock I had her coaxed round to the point where she was packing my suitcase and making up lists of things I'd need in France—woolen underwear and galoshes and sweaters and first-aid outfits and what not. And all the time we didn't either of us know what I was going to do when I got over there any more than the man in the moon. The call had tumbled right out of a clear sky. But once I'd got mamma to see the situation as it really was, outside her motherhood so to speak, she was as keen as mustard for it.

We had dinner upstairs in my room. Delia served it on a tray. And when she heard I was sailing for France she just said, "Oh, my Gawd! Submarines!" and dropped the tray and burst into tears. You'd have thought the submarines were right under my bed. At that mamma broke down altogether and Delia embraced her—Delia's been with us ever since I was born—and there followed a hectic half hour. I was beginning to think Delia had spilled the beans for me with her "Oh, my Gawd!" when all of a sudden mamma glanced at the clock, pulled herself together and exclaimed sharply:

"Good gracious, child, get into your clothes—quick! Do you want to miss that train? Delia, run down and phone for a taxi."

Delia went, still dribbling tears and tomato bisque. Then mamma rushed off a telegram to Uncle Jim to meet me in New York, rushed me into my things, rushed me down to the station, through the gate, onto the train, gave me a swift breathless hug and departed. That's the way she is, all tears one second and a regular little whiz-bang field marshal the next. But it was some evening!

The next morning in New York Uncle Jim and I breakfasted at the Belmont, after which I walked over to Red Cross Headquarters, had an interview, and took the train to Washington. I had already wired papa, who was down there on business, to meet me, and told him to watch out for a life-size jolt. When I stepped off the train, there he was, leaning against a pillar and looking, as the novelists say, singularly handsome and debonair.

"Hello, Miss Murray!" he said, taking my bag away from the porter. "Now come on with your jolt."

"*Vive la France!*" I said by way of commencement.

"Ha! So that's the bill of fare? With all my heart. May she *vive* forever. But what's that got to do with the price of winter umbrellas?"

"The *Rochambeau* sails a week from to-morrow."

"Well," said papa, still bluffing away, though I could see from the way he started that I had landed him one right over the heart, "I haven't any stock in

her. The submarines may go as far as they like."

"They want me to sail on her—as a canteener."

"As a whatter?" demanded papa.

"A canteener. A person that works in a canteen. You know—serves hot drinks and food and all to the soldiers."

"Who wants you to go?" he growled in his crosslest cross-examining-witness manner.

"President Wilson. God. American Red Cross. Mamma. Delia. Me."

"Pretty good references," observed papa dryly. "Especially Delia. But not worth a single red cent in the present instance—unless indorsed by me. Now let's get down to brass tacks. What is this all about?"

That's the way papa always talks with me, straight from the shoulder, just as if I were his law partner and we were threshing out a case. And so I told him. I told him how the high commissioner for Europe of the American Red Cross had cabled to Washington for women to be sent immediately to France to work in canteens; how Washington had telegraphed to New York to collect a group of workers without delay; how New York had telegraphed to Boston for names of suitable persons with training along that line; how Edith, the president of her Red Cross chapter, had been called into council—and how that led to me.

"It's the finger of destiny, papa," I wound up;

"and it's pointed straight at me—like the man in the ad. There's just one hitch."

"Only one?" observed papa with his grim little half smile.

"The cable says women over thirty."

"Well," chuckled papa, "I guess that lets you out—for about six years anyhow. And by that time the war will be over. Though Bairnsfeather says that the first seven years will be the worst, and after that every fourteenth year."

"I'm within the draft limit," I protested. "And if they take infants of twenty-one to be soldiers I don't see why a college graduate of twenty-four, captain of the basket-ball team and with a record in Greek, hasn't enough gumption to stand behind a counter and deal out sandwiches and coffee. It makes me sick!"

"Well, all that's a minor matter," said papa. "It's fitness, not age or lack of it, that counts. But let's waive that for the moment and get down to the kernel of this proposition. Why are you interested in this thing? Why do you want to go—or think that you want to go? Now don't hand out any cheap sentimentality. Don't insult the cause by any tawdry emotionalism. Come clean. What are your reasons?"

Followed a conference—or moral examination, rather—which lasted for over four hours, straight through dinner, up to eleven o'clock; and still we

sat on at table, papa smoking one cigar after another, until the big hotel dining-room was deserted and the lights went out. There was no question from the first of a downright refusal. He simply talked to me, eye to eye and man to man. He spoke as if I were his son, a soldier, going off to war, and he charted the cardinal points of conduct. He saw the thing big from the start, and I loved him for it. Then we talked about life and love and marriage, the rights of men and nations, and how this war was going to temper and fuse America like steel that's been through fire; we talked about personal responsibility, the Red Cross, and he showed how any human institution rested straight back on the individual, so that if I fell down on my job the whole organization would feel the shock. He didn't give me a whole decalogue of "Don'ts" to guide me over there, but he did give me three big "Do's." Here they are:

Number One: Get round your own job and leave it to the other fellow to get round his.

Number Two: Keep alive and lovable. Women, he said, are a little more apt than men to go to seed.

Number Three: Keep your sense of humor.

Altogether, it was the best talk I've ever had on earth, and when it was done he kissed me; and then we sailed out arm in arm for some ice-cream soda at the corner drug store, and I treated him and he treated me—our immemorial custom.

It was all settled the next morning that I was to go to war. They didn't even query my age!

That morning, after breakfast, papa said, "Guess I'll just walk over with you to that shebang of yours, in case you need identification."

"No, you don't!" I said. "I'm going to get this on my own credentials—my cafeteria credentials!—and not because I'm the daughter of Judge Murray, alias Old Silver Tongue. 'Get round your own job and leave it to the other fellow to get round his.' Axiom One."

Papa grinned. "Strike one—right over the plate. All right. Let me hear what the jury decides." And we went our separate ways.

At the office in the Women's Bureau it took less than ten minutes to get through the red tape and settle my future, as follows: I'm to be a canteen worker. I pay all my own expenses. And I literally do pay them, with my cafeteria money and a check I received for writing a movie. I've signed on for six months, during which time I can't marry an American army officer—without losing my job and getting sent home to America. Wow! For further orders report to Number Four, Place de la Concorde, Paris, France, seat of a world war for civilization. Think of it, oh, my soul! Well, sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, the Murray family gives its heart and its hand to this vote!

The last week has been one mad, wild, excited

scramble—with canteen uniforms, French lessons, gum boots, telephones, typhoid and paratyphoid injections, girls dropping in to say good-by, mamma dismal as a corbie crow weeping off in odd corners, and papa humming mournfully: “‘I didn’t raise my kidlet to be a soldierette.’”

On Tuesday night I said good-by to Robert. We dined together downtown and then Bob said, “Let’s go round to Lucille’s and dance.”

And so we did. But I just couldn’t seem to put any spirit into it.

“Do you realize, Bob,” I said, “that this is our last dance together?”

I suppose my voice sounded rather wabbly, for Robert gave me a sharp look and said, “Not on your life! Where did you get hold of that notion? Are you going to throw up the sponge?”

And then I remembered that my case was exactly that of a million other women scattered all over the land, who were still keeping the flag flying, as Edith had said; and so I bucked up and we finished up with a very good time.

ON SHIPBOARD, November 12th.

I begged papa and mamma not to come down to New York to see me off, but of course they would. However, it turned out all right. Papa blew us to a two-course dinner without wine downstairs in a famous grill frequented by successful actors and ar-

tists and writers, after which he packed us off to a musical comedy and kept up a light artillery of jokes all through the evening, and we both laughed so hard that mamma finally lost patience and declared we were a perfect scandal. There was just one awful moment at the last. That was on the boat when papa gave me a big still hug and then held his cheek close to mine the way he's done ever since I was a baby.

"Papa," I whispered fiercely into his ear, "if you make me cry now I'll kill you!"

"Shucks, honey!" he murmured back. "If Miss Rankin can cry in Congress I guess a green little soldierette can shed a few tears when bidding a fond farewell to native land and mother, without grave dishonor. Still, I don't want to cramp your style. Cable us when you land. Be a good girl—but not goody. And now, so long, dear. God bless us all together!"

And still smiling and steady he shook hands with me just as if I were his son, and then marched mamma, sobbing audibly, gently off by the arm. I went downstairs to my cabin.

No danger of my being sick. My bunk mate is! I hardly know how to describe my feelings after we had really started and there was time to look about—it all seemed so sort of natural and matter-of-fact, and France still merely a small pink dab on the map. It wasn't a bit startling to be out of sight of land and hear people discussing submarines and lifeboats,

but it was a horrible sensation to have the boat plunge down and leave your stomach in midair. A gorgeous sunset to-night, but it's rough and going to be rougher, I fear. I walked about some, and then decided discretion was the better part of valor and retired to my deck chair.

November 15th.

Three awful days in my cabin, too sick to stir. But to-day it's smooth and the air is marvelous. After a fine salt bath I came up and pranced about the deck; and there were lots of nice people to prance with—naval officers, Belgian generals, French *per-missionnaires*, and any number of Y. M. C. A.-ers and Red Cross men. Played shuffleboard; tried the dining-room for ten minutes, and then decided to have all my meals on deck in order to watch for the submarines.

November 24th.

Land is in sight—a long low ribbon of mist away on the starboard. That's France! It still doesn't seem reasonable. The trip has been nothing at all. Evenings we would sit out on deck. It was weird with never a light, even cigarettes forbidden; inky blackness on deck, and stumbling and pitching into someone at every step. It was awesome from the stern to see two big black funnels silhouetted against the starry sky, the phosphorescence of the water rivaling

the splendor of the heavens; and to realize that all the time this huge mechanical monster beneath our feet was plowing steadily, silently forward, carrying seven hundred human lives across three thousand miles of water.

PARIS, November 26th.

Paris at last, beautiful, soft, gray, in a blur of rain. I reported at Number Four, Place de la Concorde, heard a speech by the commissioner, and was assigned right away. It's just exactly what I wanted and didn't dare to dream I'd get! I'm to work in a canteen in one of the biggest aviation camps in France. With our own American men! We'll live in barracks, get up at reveille, five-thirty A.M., and—— But I'm somewhat hazy as to our duties. Time will reveal. After the conference I met Lucile B——, a Bryn Mawr girl, and found she's to canteen with me at the same barracks. We embraced and nearly fell downstairs in our excitement. Lucile has moved her things over to my hotel so we can chum together.

November 27th.

Slept—off and on—and had a breakfast in bed, after the luxurious Continental fashion,—wouldn't Delia sniff?—and then I read Baedeker's Paris aloud while Lucile unpacked. We lunched and did accounts and then walked over to Red Cross Headquarters.

After reporting there we got our provisional cards of identity and went down to a shop on the boulevard and ordered bracelets of identity. Had my hair washed by a poilu on permission and tried out my Boston French on him. He understood me better than I did him! Later Lucile and I taxied over to Napoleon's tomb, saw the German airplanes in the court of the Invalides, and then went on to Notre Dame. It is wonderful inside, so high and spacious and old and gray, with a scented misty twilight air as though dimmed by many prayers. I made two prayers myself—one personal, and the other impersonal for our army, and I only hope they come true.

November 28th.

While waiting to be sent to camp I delved into the subject of canteens in general. And I found that the old canteen idea is as different from the new canteen idea as day is from night. A canteen before this war meant simply a place where a soldier could buy a drink and perhaps procure notions, buttons and needles and thread. But that old idea has expanded and developed until now it really comprises a whole welfare center, a regular community plant for dispensing food and comfort and good cheer. There are restaurants, writing rooms, infirmaries, sleeping quarters, pianos, phonographs, entertainments—everything you can possibly think of to keep a collection of men far from home happy and sane and

sound. Of course not all these canteens are alike, for each one caters to some particular need and thus develops along a particular line. Its location determines its special bent.

There are, I was told at headquarters, several types of canteen.

Number One: These are the metropolitan canteens of Paris, situated at the big railway stations—the Gare du Nord, the Gare de l'Est and the Gare Saint Lazare—which catch all the troops coming into or leaving the city.

Number Two: These are the canteens of the *Grande Ceinture*, at little stations on the environs of Paris, where innumerable troop trains pass through daily, carrying thousands of soldiers from England, Italy, America, Saloniki, Portugal, Africa. These troops never even enter Paris, but are shifted on the outskirts of the city.

Number Three: Canteens in the French war zone behind the actual fighting lines in the big transportation centers.

Number Four: Canteens right on the French Front, in dugouts and *abris*. In these canteens there are no women helpers.

Number Five: Canteens in the American training camps, behind the war zone. That's the kind I'm assigned to. It's the biggest American aviation center in France.

Number Six: Canteens for American soldiers

dotted along the lines of communication from the coast ports to the final training centers. All these canteens are under the control of the American Red Cross.

December 1st.

In barracks! Yesterday was my first day. I got up in the dark at bugle call, five-thirty A.M., and dressed in the cold—our stoves are not up yet and I don't know who's going to start the fires when they are!—had some hot coffee and went over to serve behind the counter, serving coffee, chocolate and sandwiches. A long queue of soldiers stood in line straight through the morning, and, work as hard as I could, the line constantly augmented. Some wanted to linger and chat. It was good, they said, to see a real live American girl who could talk God's language, and not that scrambled-egg affair the Frenchies handed out. One confided he'd not seen a genuine honest-to-goodness girl for four months; since he'd left home, and added that he liked 'em on the American plan better than on the European plan. I couldn't do much more than smile in answer, for the orders flew thick and fast.

By noon the place was so crowded you couldn't see for the forest of campaign hats. A babel of voices; a rattle of dishes; the phonograph going; the piano banging; a bunch of enlisted men trying out *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*; canteeners running back

and forth with meals for the officers, whose tables were in behind the counter; rain trickling down my neck from an overhead leak; sleet and windy rain shaking the windowpanes; sneezes and coughs mingling with shouts of laughter; and always the far door opening to let in the storm and still more and more men, till they were packed like sardines in rows—these are my impressions of that first noon hour.

Suddenly: "*Otto, Sie haben etwas vergessen!*" I heard a low guttural voice speaking close behind my ear.

"*Ja, ich weiss,*" replied another.

I whirled, visions of spies, explosions and poisoned soup rushing wildly through my brain.

"What's this?" I cried. "German? In an American aviation camp? What are you two doing here?"

They stared at me stupidly. One held a mop and the other held a broom. Of course they were spies!

"You are Germans—*Deutsch?*" I challenged again, sure that I had uncovered a regular Guy Fawkes plot.

"*Ja,*" admitted the one called Otto, and jerked a thick dirty thumb toward his working blouse, on the chest of which was inscribed in big black letters "P G" with a slim little "i" between, so that it read "PiG."

"Pig!" I said wonderingly.

A soldier across the counter came to my aid. "Prisoners of war," he explained briefly. "P, G,

stands for *prisonnier de la guerre*. Some joker slipped the middle "i" over onto him. And it's not so far wrong at that! Look at the beggars' fat jowls. They help round the camp, unloading trucks, scrubbing up the barracks, and so on. For obvious reasons they're not allowed in the kitchens. They have their own quarters behind barbed-wire entanglements—but you just bet they don't try very hard to get away. This is better than machine-gun fire."

"Are they good workers?"

"Not so you'd notice—but they make up by being fine eaters. You should see them tuck away the grub that Uncle Sam sends three thousand miles across the sea to feed his Allies. I reckon they figure that the more they eat the less there'll be for the enemy, and there's more than one way of killing a cat. The French are too easy on them, and that's the fact."

In the afternoon things went easier for a while. As it was still raining we had mess in the canteen and then sat and made up jam sandwiches. Along about five another tremendous rush began. I was put on the *marmites*. These are big urns of coffee which are constantly filled and refilled from the boiling-hot vats on the stove. It is heavy, dirty, back-breaking work, and inside of an hour my clean blue blouse and spotless collar looked as though I had slid down a chimney. And my hands—was I ever proud of these red, chapped, grubby-nailed horrors? *Nota bene*: If you love to be dainty, don't be a canteen maid.

At nine-thirty P.M. we closed, and I was so dead tired that I tumbled into bed and unlaced my boots by the feel. The first shift is from seven A.M. until four P.M., and the second from noon to nine-thirty P.M. But some of the workers are down with severe colds, their substitutes have not yet arrived, and that means double duty for the rest. From five in the morning until nine at night is some day's job, believe me! You have to be hardened before you can stand the pace. A delicate girl would crumple up inside of a week. Of course when we get organized and a system blocked out things will move more smoothly. At present we're a brand-new plant.

December 5th.

Superb aviation weather! For the past week it's been blowing, hailing, raining, snowing, thawing, and then beginning all over again *da capo* with unabated zeal, like a child with only one tune. Water overhead and slush underfoot. Colds, pneumonia, tonsillitis, diphtheria, grippe—these are the enemies our soldiers have to face and conquer or be conquered by, every single day. And yet, despite the hostile weather, the men go up for practice just the same. And thus far only one death.

Our stoves are up. The P. G.'s have put them in every room. No more rising in the dark in freezing temperature and washing in the water from your hot-water bottle. And we've appointed a fireman to build

the fires. We're to take the job week about. As there's no water laid on in our barracks yet, we've had also to appoint a water bearer to keep the jugs filled and on the fire. Each morning the P. G.'s swab down the green linoleum floors of our quarters fresh and clean—and inside an hour they are caked with real estate. Entire town lots come away with our boots.

This morning when I went over to the canteen the cook had not shown up. And in front a long line of waiting doughboys stood, beating a hungry tattoo on the counter. What to do? Of course we could have turned them out while we rounded up another cook, but that's not what we're here for. "Get round your job," said Axiom One, and feeding these men was it. So I went into the kitchen. A soldier volunteered his aid. And all through the morning hours we two worked like firemen at a ten-story fire. Bacon and eggs, *repas complet*; we cooked and cooked and cooked.

In the afternoon as a change I was assigned to go on a camion to the neighboring farms and collect butter, eggs, vegetables and fruit. It was lowering when we set forth, with a raw chill wind that blew every way at once, and presently the air turned black and the water came down like a waterspout out of the sky. Nevertheless we completed our circuit. It was twilight when we returned. I went into the canteen kitchen.

"Well, he's been and gone!" a chorus of voices cried.

"Who?" I inquired, catching my breath. They tossed me a card and a note.

It was Bob! He had got a day's leave unexpectedly and he spent four hours of it coming down to see me, found me gone, and spent another four getting back again. He'd sent a wire last night, but of course it hadn't reached me. I suppose it will arrive the morning after eternity and rout me out of bed!

I went back to quarters feeling pretty blue. There were little zigzags of fiery pain running up and down my neck from bending so long over the stove; my skirts were sopping; and my feet in their heavy boots with their excess acreage of mud were so heavy I could scarcely drag them after me. I opened the door upon a cozy scene. Lucile was making tea. She had lifted the lid of the small fat-bellied stove in the center of the room, and with a long fork she was toasting the nubbins of war bread down over the live coals. Somebody strange was sitting in our one easy-chair.

"Come in," cried Lucile, "and shut that door! Here's a lady from 'The Saturday Evening Post'; she's come down to look at the animals in the zoo."

"Well, what do you think of us?" I asked.

"I think," she replied, looking first at Lucile bend-

ing over the stove, then round at the bare board walls hung thick with mackintoshes and storm skirts, at the shelves containing each girl's toilet articles, at the cots ranged along the sides covered with dark army blankets, at the trunks standing everywhere, at a leak in the roof from which the rain was decanting with a steady tap-tap onto my pillow, and finally back at Lucile again—"I think it's a cross between a girls' boarding house, an East Side tenement and a Western mining shack. And I think you girls are ripping to rough it like this!"

"Pooh!" said Lucile, taking up her banjo and beginning to strum. "We love the hardships. Of course a weakling couldn't stand the racket. You have to be sound through and through, or sooner or later it gets you. In a month or so, though, we're going to have enlarged quarters, and then two girls will have a cubby-hole to themselves and we'll be rid of all this clutter. Also we're going to start an officers' club where we serve hot meals to the aviators; in the same building will be recreation rooms, and just outside a garden and a tennis court. Then we'll be *grand luxe*! As yet we're still in the making, like creation on the fourth day."

"How do you keep clean?" the visitor wanted to know.

"You don't," I said grimly. "Look! But since Lucile has bought a rubber bathtub we manage a bath once in a while."

"She thinks our boots are funny," said Lucile.

"She wouldn't think they were quite so funny if she had had to oil them and keep them clean. You should have seen mine the other day when I slipped and fell in front of the post-office. I thought the whole camp and the hangars and the flying field were coming right along with me like the top of a layer cake. I give you my word, for a second I was afraid to move my feet for fear I'd lift the town."

The lady rose to go. Lucile went over to her trunk and got her diary, which the lady had asked to see. After some debate I gave her mine, too. I only hope she uses discretion!

December 11th.

Dazzling sunshiny weather. I counted seventeen planes up. Got back my diary. The lady said she read it in bed and whooped so over some of the passages that we could have heard her clear out to camp, it was the parts where I told what I thought about men. She swore, though, she wouldn't use them; and I hope she keeps her word! Worked at the *marmites* in the forenoon and behind the counter in the afternoon. Right in the middle of the rush, when I was pushing hot chocolate and sandwiches across the counter as fast as my two hands could fly, I suddenly heard a voice say: "One coffee, please—and step lively!"

It was Robert! I was so busy that there was no

time then for more than a handshake. After Robert had squeezed my hand he turned it over in his palm and stared steadily down at it, all chapped and rough and red. I cut my thumb yesterday, and the bandage was ragged and coffee-stained. Altogether, not a hand that you'd enter at a beauty show. But Bob only said "Bully little flapper!" and couldn't seem to let go of it. Then for an hour he helped me. He'd got another leave, he said, and thought he'd try my camp again.

At four I went off duty and the directrice lent us her sitting-room, where we had tea together and—well, sort of caught up on arrears. Afterward we strolled about the camp in the early twilight and came by the post-office for the mail. Robert and I stood off at one side and watched the soldiers hurrying from all directions like ants converging upon that one radiant doorway of warm streaming light. The board walks resounded to their footsteps. On and on they came, some on the dead run. It was weird to see those figures suddenly evolve out of the gloom.

"And that's not all," said Robert. "This one camp with its thousands of men is the epitome of scores of other camps over here, where at this twilight hour exactly the same performance is taking place—thousands on thousands of lonesome soldiers hastening, with eagerness in their hearts, to get that word from home. That's one end of the line. At the

other end are the girls and wives and mothers at home writing those letters with cheerfulness and faith—thousands of Susie Smiths and Mamie Joneses! A Whitman could make a fine poem out of that, naming every girl and her town. And between those two ends so far apart is the big invisible rope of love. They talk about the necessity of guns and effectives, but, by George, if they lived in one of these god-forsaken little villages behind the Front they'd realize that it's the guns plus the letters of the Susie Smiths and Mamie Joneses which are going to win this war!"

December 20th.

Robert left that same night, and ever since I've been laid up with tonsillitis—the first time I've been ill in my life. It was a splendid opportunity to think—only there wasn't anything to think about. That's the bother with this war—it kills thought. But I kept the fires up and the big jugs heating for the baths, and cleaned the girls' boots, and talked with the P. G.'s, and indexed our new library, and counted the flies on the wall, and made the tea every afternoon. Nevertheless I could feel my brain begin to disintegrate with idleness. That's the worst trouble with the soldiers in the trenches—nothing to do. It gives them the *cafards*, the black butterflies, the blue devils, the jimjams, the hump.

Christmas Day.

Raining again, slowly but surely. However, I'm on my job again—in waders; and with three pairs of heavy woolen stockings underneath. These frame buildings just can't help but leak, and they always want to leak wherever the back of your neck is. To-day we gave out Red Cross Christmas boxes to all the soldiers and cadets and officers. You should have seen the rush! Men who at home were used to receiving from their fathers a six-cylinder car as a gift and then remarking casually "Oh, thanks awf'lly, old chap!" came crowding up for those boxes, as eager as kids for tin horns. And there was no put-on about it. They wanted their Christmas presents!

After a full day we had mess—turkey!—with some of the officers, and then half a dozen of us went over to the Y. M. C. A. hut to see the movies. We sat in the front row—six women among five hundred men. These evening entertainments are a great boon. And the shows are so well attended that they have to give two performances each night. Later we danced, overshoes and all. After that we tramped over to the barracks of the P. G.'s to see their Christmas tree. Altogether it was a strange Christmas. Where shall we be this time next year? All those solid husky youngsters who filled the hall with their jolly laughter? All these slim young aviators with their budding mustaches and their straight, keen, fearless eyes? What has 1918 in store for us?

December 31st.

I've been transferred! There was a call for more workers at a certain canteen, and so some of us were shifted round. Now I am at X——, which is a canteen on the environs of Paris, of Number Two Type. Here thousands of troops pass through each day from all parts of France, carrying the Allied man power for redistribution upon every Front. Occasionally soldiers lie over a few hours while new trains are being made up, but usually they go straight through, with a ten-minutes' stop for food. Sometimes the men have traveled from thirty-six to forty-eight hours without a bite to eat. Thus our chief work is upon the platforms or *quais*, distributing hot coffee, chocolate and sandwiches. The heavy rushes come between six and eight in the morning, at noon, and once more at dusk. Often there will be trains on two tracks at the same time, one full of grim, silent troops bound for the Front, the other filled with jolly *permissionnaires* going home on leave. There is a sharp contrast of mood between those two trainloads of Frenchmen, so close together upon those narrow parallel tracks. The incoming ones face home and a brief spell of happiness; the outgoing ones face—another year! And the unending weariness of it, the bitter black nostalgia, is to be read in those black eyes straining out at you from the windows.

This is to-day's record—my first day here: I rose and was on the *quai* by six-thirty. It was dark, and

the cold was appalling. It had been snowing, and a high wind slapped icy particles against my cheek. The pavement of the *quai*, where it was not covered with snow, was caked with dirty, slippery ice so that one had to step gingerly for fear of accident. My feet were freezing, despite the customary three pairs of stockings and heavy boots.

"You'll have to get some clogs," said a white-haired American worker beside me. "Look!" She lifted her skirts and I beheld thick wooden-soled boots—sabots with leather tops. "Sweet, aren't they? But better than frozen feet!"

The train was late. The *marmites* of boiling hot coffee stood waiting by the track, each with its padded flannel jumper to keep the contents hot. The basket of ham sandwiches, apples and Camembert cheese were covered with oilcloth as protection from the wet. The workers, some Americans, some French, in blue blouses and veils, swathed to the eyes in their mantles, huddled in the sheltered lee of the station and stamped their feet and swung their arms to keep warm. Those drafty *quais* in the raw dawns are the native heath of pneumonia microbes.

Suddenly the captain of the *gare* blew his whistle.

"Here she comes!" cried the white-haired American, and seized her coffee cart and started down the track. The rest of us followed with sandwiches. The long train slowed to a halt. Snow piled high upon the roofs of the cars; snow upon the steps and vestibules;

icicles dripping from the eaves—and nobody descended! Not a move or a stir. It looked like a specter train.

“Café! Café, messieurs! Descendez, messieurs! You have ten minutes!”

It was the gay voice of a little French canteener as she ran from car to car, tapping on the window-panes. And then—bang! Some of the windows were let down, heads began to poke out, and tin cups stained with *pinard* appeared at the end of arms.

“No, no, messieurs. Descend if you please. You have time. And we can’t wait on you all up there. Ah, you little monster”—this to a big giant who suddenly loomed above—“come down from that window. The coffee is good and hot!”

That cheerful, laughing voice, so absolutely French in its intonations, roused the silent train. And then they came pouring out like a cloudburst and almost mobbed the coffee machine. Hundreds of hands and cups were under the faucet at once.

“Dix centimes, messieurs! Dix centimes, n’est-ce pas?”

The little mademoiselle shook her tin cup, and the sous rattled into it—but still the men did not speak. They drank their beloved scalding hot beverage in silence. The snow fell steadily, tipping their mustaches, the visors of their kepis, the edges of their coats—with a powder of white, like silhouettes. And still they uttered no word! Remember, it is the day

before New Year's—a day dear to every Frenchman's heart—and these men were returning to the Front. The whistle blew.

“En voiture!”

The circle of hands about the coffee machine melted as if by magic. The train sucked them in. And still not a single word had been spoken! I turned, that strange grim muteness of a voluble warm-hearted race sinking into my heart. I turned, and the spell was broken. I heard a young French voice. It was a soldier, who at the risk of losing his train had lingered to thank the white-haired canteener for filling his coffee cup. She was down on her knees in the snow, decanting the last drop of precious liquid from the machine. Her white hair was powdered still whiter with shining crystals. Her face streamed with perspiration and was rosy from exertion.

“Ah, madame,” said the soldier, “it is the sympathy and courage of women like you that give us strength to go on with this dirty war!”

She did not understand a word of his rapid lingo, but she patted his arm and smiled. Each comprehended the other! The next instant the train was a rushing shadow on the blinding white landscape.

And then before we could draw breath or refill our *marmîtes* another train was upon us. This time it was *permissionnaires* returning home. They hopped out like joyous schoolboys, with a fusillade of teasing banter.

"Aha! 'Tis the pretty little Americans! Say! You are all right, you know, you Americans!"

"I have an American marraine. Will you be my marraine, mademoiselle? You don't know how nice I am! Not 'naughty boy'!"

"Look! Ham sandwiches! My God, we're in Paradise!"

They bought out the apple basket and had apple fights. And while we were rushing the growlers cross-tracks for more coffee they marched up and down arm in arm and chanted in our honor a trench ditty about a new relative they've acquired. The chorus, loosely translated, runs like this:

" 'Tis my Uncle Sam, Sam, Sam!

*He is a fine copain.**

He comes from Amérique.

The terror of the German,

'Tis my Uncle Sam, Sam, Sam!

He is sympathique,

The great Républicain.

The victory of demain,

'Tis to Uncle Sam, Sam, Sam!"

And when at length the train pulled out, heads were thrust from the windows, cups and kepis were waved, and a rousing "*Vive l'Amérique!*" floated back to us. For these men were going home.

* *Pal.*

January 4, 1918.

Aside from the work on the *quais* we also run a canteen in behind the station, where we serve meals to the men obliged to wait for their trains. In addition next month we intend to start a buffet counter right on the tracks, where the hungry soldier passing through with only ten minutes at his command may obtain a solid meal of soup, meat, vegetables and coffee. The benefit of this kind of service to troops traveling, sometimes in open cattle cars, a day and a night without food, can never be estimated.

In our canteen we feed all the sons of earth—even German prisoners. Yesterday was our banner day. We began with some English from the Royal Flying Corps. Then followed in rapid succession Alpins Chasseurs; a company of Arabs, whose French officer had a tiny baton with which he waved them in and out and set them down to table like children in a row; Senegalese; Annamites; American negroes; Canadians; Hindus; Chinese; Portuguese; and train upon train of French and American troops. We were so rushed in the cluttered and cramped little kitchen that we had to establish a sort of bucket brigade to pass the food forward to the men.

Our cook, a mountain of jelly, is almost the ugliest woman in France; and her husband, a cross-eyed, bandy-legged little ogre, is certainly the ugliest man. And yet each considers the other a perfect paragon of beauty. Léonie brags about her handsome *mari*;

and Andre chants the praises of his exquisite "*petit ange*," and they nod and smile and coo endearing compliments to each other among the pots and pans. By profession André is a sexton, and it is only in his off hours, when he is not sweeping the church or burying the dead, that he consents to grace our kitchen with his Apollolike form.

Besides serving food, a canteen of this description is a sort of emergency bureau where almost anything may turn up. Buttons are sewn on, wounds bandaged, cough medicine administered, letters written home, and general physical and moral good cheer kept on tap day and night. After the great Italian débâcle, when thousands of French troops were being rushed down, our canteeners worked twenty-four hours at a stretch upon these icy *quais*. The emergency came in a minute, and they had to handle it in a minute. And the food they served was all the food those famished troops received. No time to halt and feed hungry mouths, with the Prussians battering down the gates of Italy! At another canteen, farther south, a trainload of French wounded came through from Italy. And the canteeners flew aboard with food, bandages and first-aid appliances, and in the brief time allotted transformed those starving, untended sufferers.

The other day a bunch of Montana cow punchers tramped into the canteen, and when the leader—a loose, lank, lean giant of seven feet nothing—saw the

American flag he took off his hat and said, "Thank Gawd, boys, we're found—at last. We're home."

It turned out that in the shift of trains they had somehow got separated from their detachment, and for over two days they had wandered about the frozen little town, without a word of French, without money—for they had not yet received their pay—and consequently without lodging or food.

"But why on earth don't you ask for something to eat?" I exclaimed. "You're nothing but great big sillies!"

The leader drew himself up proudly. "I reckon we warn't going to let none of them fly Frenchies get onto our little private plight and give us the merry ha-ha—was we, boys?"

"Not by a dern sight!" agreed the strayed mavericks stoutly.

We fitted them out with food, postals, an English-French dictionary, some French money with written instructions as to its value, and steered them on their way.

Yesterday I had an experience of still another sort. It was in the middle of a bleak afternoon, and the canteen was empty. I was sitting in the kitchen by the stove, making up the baskets for the evening rush on the *quais*—so many slices of ham, so many apples, so many pieces of cheese—when the far door opened, an American soldier drifted in, leaned over the buffet for a time, and finally with a strong Texas drawl

said: "I wish you'd write me a letter, ma'am—to my wife."

"What's the matter with your writing it yourself?"

"I don't know exactly what to say. It's dog-gone delicate, and that's a fact. You see, I got a bad die-ges-tion." He pronounced it as if it were three words, with a heavy stress on the "die."

"But you don't write with your die-ges-tion."

"No; but it's this way, ma'am. My wife, she's went and divorced me. And it's all along of my bad die-ges-tion. I don't blame her no way. I reckon that bad die-ges-tion did sort of get between her and me. But that ain't what I aim to say in the letter. It's about this here new insurance. I've made mine out in her name."

"But if she's divorced you on account of your bad die-ges-tion she has no claim on you now."

"I don't give a whoop in hell about that," he responded soberly. "I want her to get it, that's all. And I kind of thought maybe you might fix it up for me in a letter, so's she'd understand, and tell her I don't bear no grudge. I got a bad die-ges-tion."

And so I fixed it up for him in a letter; and there's one woman in America who has lost a man with a mighty good heart even if he has a bad die-ges-tion.

January 10th.

Transferred again. But this time I'm settled for good. This is a canteen of Type Number Three, in

the French war zone, in a big transportation center within sound of the guns of Verdun. Anywhere from three to ten thousand troops pass through daily. Here again, this canteen is absolutely different from the two others, because the conditions are different. It is a canteen which the French call *grand luxe*. A beautiful spacious building, given by the French Government; tastefully decorated interiors; rest rooms with papers, writing materials, piano, tables and easy-chairs; restaurant; sleeping quarters, hot baths; gardens with statuary; and *abris* in case of aërial attack—together the poilu's delight.

"*Très chic, hein?*" murmurs the Frenchman. He stares about him at the clean airy place, gay with chintz curtains, painted garlands on the walls, and even the electric globes veiled with soft yellow Chinese silk. And he catches the idea at once. "*Pas militaire, pas du tout du tout.*" That's it exactly. It's not military at all at all. The French artist who conceived the scheme was so nauseated with everything military that he let himself loose on this canteen to make it cozy and homelike and gay. Its soft beauty delights the poilu; and its baths, its disinfecting plants where he can rid himself of vermin, its kiosk where he can buy his beloved *pinard*, its hot chocolate—made with milk, after an American recipe—contribute to make it a very paradise of canteens. Its fame is known all over the French war zone. The

poilus come miles to see if it's as good as report.

At night in the rest room they lie outstretched in those canvas easy-chairs—just how easy none but a weary poilu can know!—and they stare through dreamy half-closed eyes at the warm charm of the place, soaking it in at every pore; the smoke of countless cigarettes rises in a kind of enchanted mist; there is an occasional bubble of laughter or the low-toned give-and-take of *copains* round the brazier; but chiefly there is silence, luxurious well-earned ease for tired limbs—linked sweetness long drawn out. Occasionally, when the wind is right, a vague distant rumble seems to echo in the air. Is it thunder, or is it bombardment? Or are those ears so accustomed to the ceaseless roar of heavy artillery that they still hear it resounding, even in this quiet spot? A poilu rolls over, opens one eye, listens.

“What is that? *Les canons?*”

His companion cocks an ear.

“*Mais non.*”

“*Mais oui.*”

“You’re crazy! Whence, then?”

The first soldier sits up and takes his bearings.

“’Tis Verdun,” he proclaims. “*N’est-ce pas, mademoiselle?*”

“Yes,” replies the canteener at the desk; “we can often hear the guns of Verdun on a thick night.”

“Me—I come from Verdun,” says the poilu, always ready for a chat.

"Were you one of those who held Verdun when the Crown Prince made that terrible attack?"

"*Oui.*"

"Ah, those glorious heroes of Verdun!" murmurs the canteener with misty eyes.

The simple *poilu* looks at her, puzzled, angry, and finally blazes forth:

"Heroes! Heroes! I'm always hearing about those people—those heroes. But I never saw anything of them. They weren't in the fight. I tell you, it was we, we Frenchmen alone, who won Verdun!"

The canteener apologizes to the unconscious hero.

In a canteen of this description, serving anywhere from three to ten thousand men a day, the work must be organized down to its last detail. And it is. The mechanism runs as smoothly as a well-oiled automobile. For one thing, our directrice has a "flair" for handling people, for getting along with the French domestics—we have a kitchen staff alone of twenty—and for making her workers contented and at home. Nor is the work itself so hard as in the other canteens. For one thing, labor is plentiful. For another, we live in a town. And in our time off we can shop or stroll or laze about the comfortable big house we've leased for quarters. Our hours, too, are well arranged. As the canteen remains open all night and meals are served straight round the clock, the day is divided into four shifts: From seven A.M. to one P.M.; from one to seven; from seven to eleven-

thirty; and from eleven-thirty P.M. to seven A.M. In addition there is an extra shift to help at the rush hours, which occur usually about ten A.M. and four P.M. At these times the big dining-room resembles nothing so much as a six-o'clock subway rush. The *poilus* are packed in tight as they can squeeze—every one with his head pointed toward the *caissé*, where are sold the tickets for the *repas complet*. Each meal costs seventy-five centimes.

January 16th.

Of all the shifts I love the morning best. Then the men come storming in so ravenous that it's a pleasure to see them eat. And then is when they're gayest. The afternoon is apt to be prosaic. But the night shift is the most interesting of all. Then things seem to stand out, to take on personality, to become more alive, vivid and real. Then impressions, pictures, scenes are stamped on the brain as clean as if cut with a die, true in every trivial detail. Soldiers playing cards by the light of a flickering candle, their huge ungainly shadows capering up against the wall.

Now and again from the shadows emerges a clear profile, aquiline, delicate, a living medallion with closed eyes. Over in yonder corner, for example, is a boy fast asleep. His head tilted against the wall reveals a face as finely chiseled as any on an old Roman coin. His curly lashes lie flat on his thin cheeks. His nostrils are slightly pinched. Two

perpendicular lines run from nose to jaw. How young he looks, how white and worn! His mobile mouth, softly closed, droops at the corners, like that of a tired child. He stirs and mutters something. And now he smiles! He is dreaming, that boy, I know. If his mother could see him now! . . . The rear door opens, the guard thrusts in a head and calls a certain train. The young soldier rouses, staggers for his pack, drunk with sleep, his face still soft with dreams.

I remember one night a slumbering poilu sprang to his feet, shouting "*Aux armes!*" And his voice was so thrilling and terrible, so charged with hoarse command, that all the soldiers leaped up, wide awake on the instant, and glared wildly about them. The next minute the room was filled with curses, not loud but deep.

Work of this kind, hard and monotonous as it undoubtedly is, is yet the most satisfying in the world—provided one has a gift for it. It takes hold of the heart. It is immediate, it has the warm personal touch, and it ties you straight up with humanity in the raw. The abstract philosophy of the war—who is the most to blame and why—ceases to vex you. You become absorbed in your own little circle. Life beyond it seems remote. You love the poilu and he loves you—and makes no bones about it. So let the Huns rage over behind yonder ridge, and imagine vain things. Somehow, all that does not concern

you. You have become confident, gay, certain of destiny—like the simple little poilu. It's service that does it.

Last night when I returned home from work it had stopped raining. Overhead the great overturned cup of sky glittered and gleamed—with half its stars dropped down into the dark flowing river by my side. And there was a second moon down there, pale and drowned. An enchanted mist, fine as a bride's veil, hung over all. By night the Marne is beautiful. Far off came the boom of the Verdun guns, that hammering which has been going on now for years, "as if two armies of giants were striking unceasingly at an unshakable gate of bronze." Here it was nothing but an echo on the wind. There, as one Tommy put it, it was "hell multiplied by six."

They say the Germans will break through this way. I think of the thousand thousand poilus who have tramped through our canteen, each one an anonymous hero—and I smile. It's all right. Let the Huns come on!

OLD GLORY AND VERDUN

IN the beginning we did not intend to go to Verdun. We did not dream that it was even within the bright realms of possibility. At the moment—a supremely painful and suspense-filled moment, fraught with danger to France and the Allied world—Verdun belonged strictly to the forbidden zone. Forbidden to all outsiders, men and women, to all civilians and civilian affairs; forbidden, indeed, to all the world save those grim horizon-blue-clad veterans who were rushing northward by trainloads, together with heavy effectives.

Permission had been stopped. Stopped also the parcels to the Front. It was not the hour for the manifestation of woman or love or the transmission of tokens of affection. It was the hour for men and arms. Paris, a military camp shelled in the day by long-range guns and bombed in the night by Gothas, was locked to the north with a staunch lock, and the Grand Quartier General held the key. You could come in if you chanced to be caught up there when the storm broke, but you could not get out again.

For it was the closing week of March, 1918. The long-awaited, much-heralded offensive had arrived. For months it had been the first word in the mouths of privates, officers, statesmen, editors—the entire civilized world. When, where, how—some one of those three aspects of the universal question cropped up in every conversation in the course of half an hour.

Well, now we knew the partial answer to those three questions. For the shadow of the menace of the long months was beginning to realize itself; it had become flesh and dwelt among us, a fabulous red monster of carnage and slaughter up there in the north.

When the Germans struck their first sledge-hammer blow and the Fifth British Army recoiled before the blow the entire line from north to south felt the thrill of the shock. Paris, the goal of the enemy, felt it, too, and there went up from the city a kind of big sigh, a long exhalation, which was almost a breath of relief. At any rate the long suspense was past. At the end of the third or fourth day refugees began to pour in by thousands, a poor, tragic, dazed procession, twice bereft of their scanty possessions. They brought with them wild, incoherent, garbled accounts of the terrible sanguinary losses on both sides.

Paris, perhaps all France, possesses the feminine temperament. In hours of ease she is willful, coy and

hard to please—especially with strangers; she is charming, baffling, impatient, outspoken over the foibles of her best friends and allies, keenly aware of the ridiculous, gay with a spice of maliciousness; her caricatures, often grossly unjust, are masterpieces of fine satirical wit. But in the hour of trial she gathers herself together with a courage, a poise and a profound tenderness for those of her people who have been stricken that are exceedingly good to see.

And that is what happened now. Paris found immediate food and shelter for the fugitives; printed proclamations that appeared all over the city, bidding the citizens to remain steadfast and unshaken in their faith of victory and put no credence in lying rumors; and at the same time, as the Big Berthas continued their vehement spitting at intervals, and the air raids harried and took toll of the city's innocent poor—for it is chiefly the workers, the servants, the little people of Paris living in the top stories up under the roofs who had to descend each night to the caves at the call of the siren—the newspapers urged all families who could afford it, all those who had children or old or sick to remove themselves out of the new zone of danger to the tranquillity of the country.

And thousands followed the wise advice. Hôtels de luxe were emptied inside of a week. Shopkeepers and workers who could manage to leave ordained a



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THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE CITADEL OF VERDUN. NEXT, ON LEFT, MISS FRAZER, IN HELMET, CARRYING GAS MASK. THE TUNNEL-ENTRANCE TO THE FORTRESS IS IN THE BACKGROUND.

spring holiday and departed to their relatives in the provinces. It was an exodus. There were left the big wide empty places of Paris, filled with a gray-blue gossamer mist soft as chiffon, which wrapped all the city in an enchanted web; the tranquil garden walks deserted by children, vivid with rhododendrons and the drifting pink and white petals of chestnut blooms; and the good solid block of reliable Paris citizens, neither frightened nor fugitive, who had lived through the Marne and the Mons and the Champagne and the Verdun attacks, and who read the disquieting communiqués with composed faces and went about their affairs as usual.

Practically no troops are now routed through the capital, but occasionally one saw small detachments of *fantassins* with their heavy marching equipment filing through the empty squares. They did not look warlike, those poilus, veterans of four years, when they appeared in the streets of Paris. They marched slowly, laboriously, one foot lagging after the other, shoulders bent beneath the weight of the kit, their eyes fixed on the ground. The horizon-blue uniforms were faded and patched and their clumsy storm coats with the skirts buttoned back gave them an indescribably pathetic air. Seen thus at twilight and melting into the dusky background there was something about these somber, slow-plodding, burdened figures that hurt the heart. One felt an overwhelming tenderness, a pity for these brave little men. And yet these were

the selfsame poilus who a few days later stemmed the furious German tide—and they sang as they went into battle. And nearly four years they sang!

It would not be untrue to say that underneath her courageous calm Paris did not feel the cruel strain of that first uncertain week of the offensive. The strain of the situation was brought home to me, waiting for my passes, by several incidents. Naomie, the trim little *femme de chambre*, pretty as a pink camellia, whose voice has the soft deep throb of a cello, went about with a face as pale as the linen she bore on her arm. And as she made the bed and swept and aired the room she wept, quietly, steadily, the silvery globules stealing silently one by one down her cheeks. When they obstructed her vision she stopped, brushed them away methodically and went on. My pillow was wet with Naomie's tears.

"I am ashamed, mademoiselle; I ask pardon to be like this," she murmured one morning when I had caught her outright drying her eyes. "One must be strong these days. But my husband, he has been transferred up north on the British line. And now I have not heard from him, here it is over a week. Before he always sent me a little word each day. He never failed—some little word each day." She plaited the counterpane with unseeing eyes as she muttered: "Ten days! Yes, it is that—just. And not one little word. But one must be strong, *n'est-ce pas, mademoiselle?*"

The next disturbing thing that happened was the news that B—— had deserted. His wife was my friend. B—— was a Frenchman in a famous fighting regiment, sensitive, fine-strung, none too strong, who had been in the trenches since 1914. What evil of fear, irritation, revolt or sheer brain collapse led to the decision we shall never know. But one day he threw down his gas mask in the midst of an attack and walked out of the trenches. His battalion had been incessantly shelled for weeks. In the front-line trenches they were hammered by the guns. In the back areas, *en repos*, they caught the bombs. No sleep in either place. This kept up week after week. And suddenly, like an elephant, B—— had “gone bad.”

He appeared suddenly in Paris at a time when not a single Frenchman was on leave; and he walked the boulevards with the number of that famous fighting regiment on the collar of his tunic blazing forth for all the world to see. It was a miracle he was not instantly caught. As it was he was a prisoner; for he had no papers, and therefore he could not send a telegram or register at a hotel or take a train or leave the city. A friend telegraphed for B——’s wife, who was in the country, sending a noncommittal wire so as not to alarm B——’s mother, an ardent patriot, who would have instantly handed over her recreant son to the police. The wife arrived. To her B—— declared his intention of joining the For-

eign Legion. That meant that his brain flare or momentary cowardice had passed.

Anyone may join the Foreign Legion. There no embarrassing questions are asked. They take on all comers, and then pitch them headlong into the very hottest hell of the battle. Accordingly B——, knowing that if he could once win to their offices he would be safe from arrest, stole out from his doorway one morning and, avoiding officers and gendarmes, gained the recruiting bureau.

But here an unexpected blow fell. The recruiting end of the bureau had been shifted to Lyons. But how to get there! He could not ride in a train or a public conveyance. He could not dine openly in a restaurant or sleep in a hotel. And to be seen tramping south in this crisis meant certain arrest and death. However, there was nothing for it but to make the attempt—to walk by night and lie hidden in the day. He started forth—and no word has been heard of him since.

In time the news of his desertion leaked out. And the gendarme on the beat took it upon himself to rebuke Madame B—— for having such a villain husband. He is a fat, greasy, bald-headed little man, this gendarme, who sits long over his grenadine, and has never been nearer the Front than the city fortifications.

Madame B—— flew at him like a fury.

“Have you ever been out there—fat *embusqué*?”

she shrilled, shaking her finger under his nose. "Have you fought four years in that hell? Been wounded five times, had fever, rheumatism, suffered from shell shock, been made deaf from bombardment, had your nerves shattered so that you never sleep? Is your hair turned gray at twenty-five years? Oh, my God! No? Then keep your mouth shut! 'Tis not for such as you to speak of this war! 'Tis for those who have endured."

It was this courage made human by the private griefs of the people of France, who after four weary, crucifying years were still bearing the cross, filling the breach, saving the day, and saving it with a superb dash despite individual heartbreaks, that filled my mind as, our passes obtained, we journeyed northward. It seemed to me that perhaps the month of March, 1918, was to be made memorable by the fact that at that particular time America began definitely to shift to her own young shoulders the weight of the agonizing burden France had borne so long. For this reason the opening offensive marked a transition period, for theretofore we had held only quiet sectors.

But it was not the fact of the shifting of the outward burden that interested me so much as to discover if possible whether that shift was to extend also to the spirit—whether the soul of France, the soul of her soldiers, her poilus, was to pass into the soul of this new, strong, eager young Army. For the

quality that distinguishes the poilu from his enemies and from his allies alike is not brute force, or body fitness, or stubborn pride, or stiff resistance, or obedience, or cohesion, or physical valor—but sheer spiritual stamina. He has an invincible come-back. His soul can't be beat. The French, who are an extremely clannish race, say that they feel a closer bond with Americans than with any other people on earth. This is not mere diplomatic balderdash. They declare that aside from possessing the same democratic ideals, the same passion for scientific research, there is a decided similarity of temperament. In both peoples there are the same swiftness of perception, the same suppleness of mind, lightness of wit and comradeship toward life and toward each other which have made France like one great family. And now that the two nations in this offensive are fighting side by side and brigade by brigade, the French in their speeches and editorials and communiqués have announced that the spiritual metal of the two armies is the same; that the spontaneous, unquenchable, "*En avant! Toujours en avant!*" quality of attack, attack, and again attack of the French poilu is also the salient characteristic of the newcomers. It was this particular declaration that put a keener edge on my observations during my journey. I was on the lookout for signs in our men of the conquering will of the poilu.

It is not germane to the subject to describe in

detail that eight-day motor trip through the heart of the American war zone in France. We covered each day hundreds of kilometers of the lovely rolling meadow and hill country of Lorraine—orchards, fields and woods radiant in shimmering green, clothed in primal light of leaf. We passed scores of red-tiled hamlets, each the identical facsimile of the other, with steaming manure heaps adorning the front yards of prominent citizens, hens and bouncing babies scratching therein, and toothless old dames sitting on the doorsteps peering out upon the world with faded eyes.

We stopped at numerous American base-hospital centers, some in stone cantonments, formerly army barracks turned over by the French; some former hotel resorts; and still others brand-new frame buildings, entire villages with duck-board streets. We motored through endless series of *repos* stations, one following hard upon another like beads on a string, of English, American, French, Italian, Portuguese, Annamite and Senegalese troops. At the close of the day in the rosy smolder of the afterglow we hunted aviation camps in the advanced war zone, and found the vast aërodromes so shrewdly camouflaged that we could scarcely discern them from the dappled landscape. We passed through the center where is situated the training school for army officers, a beautiful old fortified town set like a coronet high on a wooded hill. We stayed the night at Army Head-

quarters in a hotel packed with the hierarchy of the General Staff, where automobiles with flags drew up before the door and mackintoshed generals beribboned and bestarred strode in out of the lashing rain.

Our quest took us from the drowsy, tranquil rear of the war zone clear up to the Luneville sector beyond Toul, where we witnessed two air fights in the course of one morning. It was the portion of France given over to the American effort. We traversed and crisscrossed it back and forth and from end to end. And everywhere we met the same phenomenon—the lithe, clean-limbed, khaki-clad American soldier. The land was alive with him! Several months previously I had been over this same territory, and then even a Red Cross man was a rare animal which the natives paused to regard. Now, after eight months, the entire countryside hummed and buzzed like a vast beehive. It was the visible result before our eyes of all the sweat and labor and strain of a mighty nation intent on a single goal—to transport men to France.

Well, here were the men, hundreds of thousands of them, scattered over a vast camp ground. We met battalions of them swinging along the roads in step and singing a lively marching air. We came across them in sunny fields prodding dummy Huns with bayonets; we passed groups of them in remote and peaceful valleys picking off targets at rifle ranges. We met them at lonely crossroads, together with a

French comrade, acting as military police. They gave us the salute that is known as the Pershing—bringing the hand smartly up to the forage cap in an abrupt little gesture full of style. And they invariably followed the salute with an infectious after-grin. The salute was Pershing's. The grin was all their own. We saw them tearing along roads at a breakneck clip in those snorting demons of motor-cycles called "wife-killers." We overtook them driving camions and transports and mule teams.

Later we met an entire division on the move—artillery, infantry, ammunition and cook wagons—a long strung-out procession against the drab sky line. They were bound up there, they vaguely told us. But we knew and they knew that they were going to participate in a struggle compared to which life in the drowsy Toul sector was as but a holiday fête. We glimpsed them driving powerful American locomotives, beside which the diminutive French engines seemed like toys that one could pick up in the palm of the hand—and they leaned far out of their cabooses to cheer. We saw them packed like herrings in the dingy low-ceiled dining-rooms of provincial towns, drinking their *pinard* diluted with water in true *poilu* style, then fetching out their makings and rolling a smoke in true American style. We saw them in camp, *en repos*, in hospital, on the march.

There is a pageantry about war when one sits back thus and views its effects from the outside—a

kind of large, glittering nobility which thrills and quickens the blood despite oneself—until one sees the wrecks. And in the hospitals we began to get the wrecks. In——, a famous old town turned into a hospital center, we stopped to look up some missing men. The other members of the party went to visit the wards, but I wandered about the streets and presently came upon a squad of privates in wrinkled, freshly disinfected uniforms, the tunics skin-tight, revealing the owners' slim waists and finely swelling shoulder muscles. But they had a pale washed-out look, as if they themselves had undergone the ordeal of disinfection along with their uniforms. A lieutenant was calling the roll.

Aside from the line-up a few paces stood a husky private with a sulky lowering face. He had crowded his battered sombrero down over his bloodshot eyes and was scowling like a movie pirate. "What's happening to those men?" I asked, nodding at the squad.

"They've been gassed and now they're declared O. K. and are going back to the Front."

He spoke in a curious broken rasping whisper, which I recognized.

"You've been gassed, too?" I hazarded.

"Yes," he croaked. "And I'm just as well as any fellow in that gang. We all got it at the same time. But the doc, when he heard my voice, wouldn't let me go. But damn it all, a guy don't fight with his voice!"

"He's playing favorites, that doc," whispered another lank, humorous-eyed young giant strolling up, his peaked forage cap drawn low so as to shelter, if possible, those bloodshot eyes. "Wouldn't let me out, either! Durn the durned docs, I say!"

"But you were burned as well as gassed," I objected, for the entire lower part of his face and neck was an angry red peeling blister. "What kind of gas was it?" I demanded.

"Mustard. Burns your insides out if you get a bad case. I tell you I've had enough to last me one life. No more mustard on cold beef for mine!"

"And how is the gas-mask discipline?"

"Well, that depends on the battalion. In my battalion the commander was strong for drills. We had them morning, noon and night, and in the middle of the night. Seemed as if the old man had gone crazy on gas discipline. But when the big gas attack came we had only a four per cent casualty list, and the battalion alongside, which had been going easy on drills, caught it something fierce. Our battalion got recommended to G. H. Q. I caught my gas in a dugout the next day."

"And you are still keen to get back into all that?"

"Am I?" he repeated, his eyes hardening. "I'll tell you how I feel: When I first came over I had a kind of sneaking notion that Heinie wasn't so dusky as he was painted. But I lost that notion pretty quick when I got up front and saw my lieutenant

shot in the back by a boche prisoner who had thrown up his hands. Now I want to lick the Huns till they holler, and then keep on licking them for a year after that for the good of their souls."

Inside of the hospital were grimmer cases. In one of the wards we came on a Texan with the bright, clear-gazing eyes that one sometimes finds in old sailors. They had taken his leg off. When we asked how he was making it he turned on us those straight deep eyes, and there was trouble in them.

"There's just one thing I'm sorry for," said he.

"What is that?"

"That I didn't have more time."

Time for what, I wondered. And then looking down on that wrecked body, with the covers lifted high over apparatus so as not to touch the tormented nerves, I thought I understood. He was sorry he didn't have more time to get out of the way. That was it. It was what anybody would wish for—two, three, five seconds of grace to have gotten out of the way. Lying here through the long hours empty of everything but pain, he had doubtless worked out the problem to the finest precision, and he knew to the last trick just how much more time it would have taken to have dropped to the ground, to have eluded that exploding shell. Now all his life long he was going to regret the lack of those few precious seconds.

"Yes," he repeated slowly, laboriously, the trouble

still in his eyes, "I'd like to have had more time. Don't seem right somehow. 'Tain't fitting to be lying here with the show just begun. I'd like to have done more damage. But," he brightened, "I've figured there's still some jobs a peg-legged man can do over here. And I tell you one thing: I'm not going home till we've licked the Huns or the Huns have licked us."

He laughed at the latter impossibility, and the laughter shook his body and turned him pale. And still he laughed on. I thought when he wished for more time that he was thinking in terms of self and personal safety, and all the time he had been thinking in the biggest terms of service to mankind.

It was not until the fifth day of our trip that Verdun loomed on the horizon as a rosy possibility. We were dining in Nancy at Voltaire's with M. Martin, the *sous-préfet* of the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. M. Martin, it appeared, had never been in Verdun. Since we had business at a French hospital fifteen kilometers from the citadel he thought it possible, probable—of course, nothing was sure; absolutely no Verdun passes had been issued for ten days—still, one never could tell; and if we would like him to try—he paused to beam and smile—if we would give him our papers he would send them in to the Grand Quartier General, together with his own, and then—well, in short we would await the turn of events.

"Whether we shall be accorded permission at this crucial moment is doubtful," he concluded. "But at any rate we may hope."

So we turned in our papers and we hoped. To see Verdun at this crisis, when to the north millions of men were crashing together in terrific combat, with an appalling sanguinary back tide of wounded and dead, lent the occasion a deep significance, for Verdun to the whole world has become a symbol of confidence, a kind of ark of the covenant to battling mankind. I did not conceal from myself that what gave Verdun its specific interest to me was the news that our troops round Montdidier and Amiens were now engaged in the present titanic struggle. That fact took the famous fortress out of the list of mere great monuments of history; it made it in short our own, part and parcel of America, its glories our glories, its defense our defense, its high challenge our challenge, its victory our victory. But there was something more than that in the back of my mind. Verdun was behind the French, so to speak, finished history. Our Verduns were still of to-morrow, a promise, a prophecy. The actors were those humorous-eyed khaki-clad soldiers standing at lonely cross-roads who had given us the smart little salute with the friendly aftergrin. Thus it was with the feeling of reading ahead of time a page of history not yet evoked but inevitable that I prepared to go to Verdun.

The past week had been of a piece with the raw

spring weather, lowering, foggy or sluicing water by the liquid ton out of a somber sky. With one accord we prayed for sunshine in order to view the surrounding heights, Côte 304, Saint Mihiel, Douaumont, Veau and Mort Homme. But the day that dawned was brother to the rest—bleak, dark, with a clinging fog, which muffled the landscape and grew ever thicker as the hours passed. Our passes had arrived from French Headquarters, but the final visé, the permission to enter Verdun itself, must be obtained at V——, fifteen kilometers from the citadel, and if there was heavy shelling either of the fort or of the surrounding roads we should certainly be refused.

It was six o'clock in the morning when as guests of the French Government and of M. Martin in particular we clambered into a military automobile, one of those lean, powerful drab monsters that go cycloning along the highways behind the lines at a stupefying rate of speed. We had estimated that, including necessary stops at French hospitals containing American wounded, we should arrive at Verdun about noon. Therefore we had taken the precaution to bring our luncheon, with the intention of picnicking among the ruins and perhaps obtaining some coffee from the *poilus'* mess. The *chefs d'oeuvres* of the provisions were two tiny cold fowl de luxe weighing about a pound apiece, which had cost eight round silver dollars.

The next four hours on my part were given to the task of keeping my hair and my ears on. For the wind as it swooped by tried to drive us bodily from the car; the cold congealed us in cramped positions and the fog chilled us to the bone. We could not discern the road twenty yards ahead. The car roared forward into a barrage of thick mist which shredded on the hillcrests only to sag more heavily in the valleys. This, M. Martin assured us, was typical Picardy weather. At crossroads where we were stopped by the police M. Martin presented his card of identity, signed in Joffre's own hand, and we were waved onward with honorable presentations of arms. As we neared our destination we diverged from the straight highroad, making a detour, for some routes are reserved for ingoing and some for outgoing traffic, and these routes are constantly altered in order to safeguard materials and confound the Hun.

Arrived at V—— we drew up in a long rank of machines in front of Headquarters and M. Martin vanished to make his felicitations to the commandant and to telephone in to Verdun. Our fate still hung in the balance. The minutes slipped by. Generals—French, American, British—dashed up in their automobiles, descended, saluted and vanished or stood talking in earnest groups. Americans, recognizing compatriots, saluted us from streets and doorways and strolled over to ask of home and how the

Statue of Liberty fared. She was a pretty fine old girl, *quoi?*—as the French say.

An hour passed. And still M. Martin tarried. At the end of twenty minutes more he reappeared down the end of a street, his civilian black standing out in striking relief against the motley of khaki and horizon-blue uniforms and gold braid.

"En avant!" he exclaimed gayly, climbing into the car. "They got the commanding officer of the citadel on the wire. He expects us and asked us to mess with his officers in the citadel, but I refused, as it will be long past one by the time we arrive. This fog after all has served us well. They are not bombarding the fortress to-day."

I do not recall the last fifteen kilometers of that journey, save that we sped like the wind, straining our eyes through the mist for the first glimpse of the famous stronghold. Presently "There! There!" broke simultaneously from our lips, and a few minutes later we were rolling under a noble stone archway, green and mossy with age, which looked as if it had been reared in the days of Uther Pendragon, and were being greeted by the commanding officer of the citadel of Verdun. We were to take everything out of the car, said he, and come right in. Lunch was waiting. In vain M. Martin protested. The colonel waved his protests aside with a smile. He led us into the fortress, down a long underground tunnel, which rang hollowly beneath our feet, to a

set of guests' dressing rooms, where we repaired the ravages of the long ride. A few minutes later he returned, conducted us through another series of corridors, through an enormous mess hall, where the men as he entered sprang clattering to their feet, and ushered us into the officers' mess room.

It was small, that dining room situated forty feet underground in the stone heart of the citadel, seating scarce a dozen persons, and simple, lofty-ceiled, severe. And yet it was a veritable jewel, flashing with rich strong colors, magnificent with its brilliant sheaths of battle flags, and glittering with the steel and silver and gold of its souvenirs of valor—armor and medals and trophies which gleamed from cabinet and wall. Here had collected at one time and another all the great chiefs of the Allies; and here the presumptuous Crown Prince had sworn to eat his triumphal banquet.

Over the mantelpiece hung the pennants of all the Entente Powers, a bright formidable array, topped with the watchword of the impregnable fortress, "*On ne passe pas*," a phrase descending from the days of the Little Corporal. The opposite wall bore medals of honor—the Croix de Guerre, the Medaille Militaire and the Legion d'Honneur bestowed by a grateful nation upon the citadel itself, as if it possessed a glorious soul. Here and there hung heavy-studded shields surrounded by rayons of ancient swords and battle-axes.

What we ate or whether we ate I cannot recall. The colonel had left us, bidding us genially to make haste, as there was much to see, much to recount, and we sat drinking in the spell of that wondrous little room, steeped in the atmosphere of valor, hearkening to the voice of the past, rejoicing in the brave prophecy of the future, and trying to realize that even as we sat French and American troops were rushing north to stem the furious onslaught of the Hun.

"Well, now," said the colonel, opening the door, "if you are refreshed we will begin. We shall take first the view of the heights, then I shall show you the fortress, and after that the ruins of Verdun."

We had asked M. Martin to recount the history of the great offensive, and he had turned over the appeal to the commanding officer of the citadel, who had promised to describe the climax of the decisive battle on the exact spot where the Germans made their final stubborn stand and were beaten back with stupendous loss.

Outside, the weather had settled to a continuous drizzle. We wound round the hill by a serpentine road and presently attained its crest. Here we abandoned the car and stumbled over a torn and wrenched terrain, pitted with shell holes fifty feet across and partially filled with black filthy water. Filled also with old dismantled cannon, unexploded cartridges, rusted bayonets, twisted iron fragments of great

shells, and an occasional sodden képi. Between these craters the hummocks were dotted with graves marked with a cross and the simple French *cocarde*. Standing under that bleak sky and gazing out across that sinister smitten landscape with its gaunt shot-off trees and its deep gashes of trenches marked by blood-red earth was like looking upon some huge monster frozen in a horrible death agony. It had been foully murdered, that hill, and it lay like a mutilated corpse, stiffly outflung, uncovered, indecent, its hideous wounds gaping up to the sky.

The colonel came to a halt. "Here we are," he began. "Here is the farthest point that the enemy penetrated. Here he was beaten back—just at your feet, mademoiselle." He pointed with his cane, and I stared down, expecting to see I scarce know what, some visible sign, some chalk mark or whitewashed tennis-court line, to identify that tremendous check. But there was nothing. My feet were pressing down a clump of fresh blue violets, wet-eyed from the rain. I stepped off them hastily.

The colonel continued his narrative. The wind blew back the heavy skirts of his greatcoat; his sturdy, compact figure, firmly planted as a statue, defied the elements; his leonine white head, which reminded one of Joffre's, glistened with rain drops; his voice, gentle, level, dispassionate, filled one with utter conviction. We knew what he said was true. Here came the enemy from that direction—he pointed—

and from there, and there, all converging on this one point. And when they were very near, advancing shoulder to shoulder in dense mass formation, two concealed French batteries, one from either side, opened on their serried columns a terrific enfilading fire. It was close-range slaughter—such as was going on even now in the north. Their first ranks lay in windrows. Their dead covered this hill like a carpet. And still their thinning numbers were filled with rushing hosts from behind and they pressed on and on, wave upon wave, the farthest of which had broken just at the point where we stood. There it was pushed back by a spirited counter thrust by the French *fantassins*.

“And your own troops, *mon colonel*, I suppose they gave a good account of themselves?” queried M. Martin.

“You have said it,” replied the colonel with proud simplicity. “My brave men in that attack covered and recovered themselves with glory.”

In the meantime, he continued, down below—he would show us presently—another strong enemy force had tried to force an entrance to the fortress at one of the tunnel exits. This exit, leading by a series of passages on different levels to the very innermost heart of the citadel, gave on the outside upon a contracted open space between two ridges, and was protected first by a deep surrounding fosse filled with a maze of barbed wire, and second by a fifteen-foot

stone wall which formed part of the outer fortifications. Down this wall the Germans had leaped like a tumbling cataract. The first wave fell into the fosse and was followed by another and another, until the ancient moat was heaped level with a writhing human bridge across which the hostile troops rushed and gained the narrow space before the mouth of the tunnel.

“And were there no French machine guns playing upon them from the entrance?”

“Oh, yes—there were two seventy-fives,” said the colonel quietly, “less than a hundred yards away.” We could perhaps imagine, he continued, what carnage they wrought in that confined space. Germans had dropped down from that height like overripe fruit trained against a wall. The French gunners obliterated the first, the second, the third and the fourth waves; and the fifth broke right on the flaming snouts of their guns. The sixth gained the tunnel entrance. Here the garrison counter-attacked, and the enemy turned tail and ran. But not far. The wall was before them and the guns were behind. That particular hostile force was wiped out to a man.

The colonel’s calm voice flowed on and on, describing the desperate details of that epic attack, and now and again he pointed with his stick into the fog, locating great enemy batteries which had poured a deadly hail of shells upon this hill. Altogether, he

said, the French had lost in killed during that six months' offensive one hundred and ten thousand; the Germans more than half a million. And most of them had fallen on and round this height on which we stood. I looked about that somber, brooding, ghost-haunted hill, where half a million souls slain violently in battle had flown upward in a thick mist—and as I looked it seemed that the fog had a ruddy under tinge as if a subtle crimson reek exuded from the blood-drenched ground.

As the colonel continued his narrative I tried in fancy to reconstruct the vision of the battlefield. Of German prisoners I had seen a-plenty with their close-cropped, bullet-shaped heads and furtive yet arrogant eyes. The French poilus also—those gay, stout-hearted little men, some of the greatest fighters and the greatest phrase-makers on earth—were familiar figures in my mind. So that all the ingredients of the picture were at hand. Nevertheless, all unconsciously I kept making a curious mental error. The intensity of the combat still raging to the north somehow drew the picture out of focus, causing it to appear, not past history but something which was still actually going on. I knew it was past, and still it fused in my mind with the unfinished present.

Added to that, my brain was so saturated with images of our American troops as I had seen them the past week, and those images were so vivid, powerful and real that I could visualize nothing else.

Thus, when the colonel said "*nos soldats*," my mind unconsciously translated "our soldiers"; and I saw, not the horizon blue of the poilus but the clean, lithe khaki-clad Americans with their fresh faces and good-humored eyes. And when he said "Our brave troops charged here—and here—and here," my mind saw "our brave troops charging here—and here—and here." I tried to rid my mind of that delusion—for it was too painful on that dusky death-smitten hill, with the knowledge that even at that very moment our own brave troops were indeed charging to the north upon some other hill. But the past week had etched the images too deeply on my mind; and I could not wipe them out.

M. Martin interrogated the colonel concerning their losses.

"Yes," replied the colonel soberly, "one hundred and ten thousand of our men fell."

"One hundred and ten thousand of our men fell!" reiterated my heart with a pang. Never before had that figure seemed so monstrous. Why, that was one, two, three, four, five whole divisions! Our first division, that I had seen, our second, all those fine Rainbow fellows—pshaw! It was incredible!

"One hundred and ten thousand are a great many men to die!" I remarked aloud.

And even as I spoke, my mind, righting itself, said within itself: "But of course those one hundred and ten thousand men were Frenchmen! Not Americans.

Our men have only just gone north. Don't you remember, you saw the —th Division on the move?" Thus mentally I righted myself. Nevertheless, one hundred and ten thousand were indeed a great many men to die, and I repeated my remark.

"*Pas trop!*"—not too many!—replied the colonel simply. And those two words, soberly spoken, were the epitome of the Verdun spirit.

Later he pointed out a cemetery on a distant hillside containing five thousand fallen heroes. "In that one cemetery," said he, "lie thirty of my own officers."

"And you, you have been wounded, my colonel?" inquired M. Martin.

"Three times only," replied the colonel with a shrug. "Once seriously. But I would not leave the citadel. I do not like hospitals—those white places. They are not for me. If I die I die here where I belong, with my men."

The rain still continued, a steady drenching down-pour. "But you may be thankful," remarked the colonel, wiping his streaming face, "as otherwise this hill would be impossible. To-day the cannon are giving us a rest."

He led the way to the nearest tunnel entrance to the citadel. With the others I followed, eagerly listening to his explanations. But my mind was still in a whirl. That dark and desolate blood-soaked hill, the staunch old colonel, with the dewdrops in his

white hair, recounting the valorous deeds of his fallen heroes, those acres on acres of graves, the ascending hosts of souls—were not some of them perhaps still lingering in this lonely spot, dazed by their violent severance from the flesh, ignorant that they had passed across? Would they not cry out at night for aid, for news of the battle front: “Why are we abandoned thus? Who wins? *Vaterland? La Patrie?*”—the Americans, who had not engaged in this struggle, to be sure, but were now fighting in an even mightier struggle—all these things mingled confusedly in my mind like the unmatched parts of a puzzle.

Thanks to my classical education, I had no proper conception of what constitutes a modern fortress. I had vaguely imagined it as a city ringed round with a very substantial stone wall, crenelated and turreted, with dozens of peepholes for the doughty gunners to take pot shots at the enemy established outside. In the very heart of the city would be the citadel, which figured in my mind as a big, round, impregnable stone tower bristling with teethlike rows of cannon, its foundations naturally extending scores of feet underneath. Accordingly when we set out to traverse the long series of dimly-lit reverberating subterranean passages, descended flights of slimy stone stairs to lower and darker levels, stopped in gun and ammunition rooms, electric-plant rooms, kitchens, mess rooms, infirmaries, chapels, musées,

cinema and rest rooms, dormitories, cavernous abodes, twenty, thirty and forty feet below ground, I began to wonder when we were going upstairs.

"But there is no upstairs," responded M. Martin, laughing in answer to my query—"not in this citadel. Here it all is, just as you see, underground. You observed those big iron mushroom affairs six inches or so aboveground when we were up on the hill?"

"But I thought they were the observation posts of hidden guns—like that of the Big Bertha."

"So they are—they are our own Big Berthas. Nevertheless, those observation posts are all the upstairs there is to this citadel. What do you suppose would happen to the superstructure of a fort if it were hit by a shell which made a crater as large as the one we saw on the hill—fifty feet across and twenty feet deep? Not much upstairs left, eh?"

So much for a classical education!

"And all the French troops eat and sleep and pray and drill down here? There are none billeted in Verdun?"

"There's nobody in Verdun."

"No old men and old women who still cling to their ruined firesides and creep out into the morning sunshine after a night's bombardment?"

"Not a single soul. It's a blanched city of the dead."

By this time it was well upon six o'clock and we stopped for a moment to view a mess hall where,

seated at long refectory tables, about four hundred poilus were taking sustenance from great steaming casseroles of ragout placed in the centers of the tables. Here indeed were the veritable heroes of Verdun! The indomitables! I looked for halos, but found none but the fragrant encircling wreaths of the smoking ragout, which the heroes were bolting down like one o'clock. These men, however, were no callow youths, but tough-muscled, tanned and bearded veterans—or if they were youths they were veteran youths with lines in their faces and gray in their hair. As the commanding officer loomed in the doorway they sprang to their feet as one man. The colonel waved them back to their stew, explaining that here were some of their allies—American friends. What a cheer it was that rose! Some of the Americans frankly wiped their eyes. The colonel beamed round upon us all with a kind of indulgent fatherly grace. His blue eyes caressed his troops with affectionate regard.

And as we departed he commented: "You will please note one thing: I did not order that cheer. It sprang spontaneously from the hearts of my men."

He continued to speak of America, of the deep fraternal tenderness existing in the hearts of the French for the splendid young army from overseas; of the fine morale America was exhibiting in the business of food conservation; of the hope

they had in American aviation. Simple, brave, friendly words from a brave, friendly soul.

We tramped on through vast resounding twilight caverns, slippery underfoot with mud and exuding large clammy dewdrops from the overarching walls. Sometimes it was pitch dark and a pocket torch or the outstretched hand of the colonel guided our course. Once we climbed by a kind of vertical ship's ladder fastened against the solid wall up into the platform of a monstrous subterranean gun which hurled annihilation miles away. For months the Germans had been assiduously trying to locate that gun.

It was the colonel who suggested the idea of Verdun as a Mecca for tourist parties after the war.

"Here they will come," he chuckled, "by train and ship loads from all over the civilized world to view this historic spot. They will passionately collect every old piece of shrapnel or cap or exploded cartridge, every stick, every brick, every stone. And when all of the veritable souvenirs have been snatched up doubtless our ingenious guardians of the citadel will resow the sacred ground with another artificial crop from a huge factory established hard by. 'Twill be an industry. They will charge—let me see—three francs admission." And the colonel laughed heartily over his prophecy.

"But they will not have the commanding officer of the citadel for their guide!" interjected M. Martin slyly.

"If they have the commanding officer of the citadel for their guide it will be five francs," said the colonel firmly. "Three francs for an ordinary tour; five francs with the commanding officer for guide. That is not too dear!"

They elaborated the idea with gayety. Instead of great rough soldiers with clattering bayonets and clumping boots, the hollow corridors would reverberate to soft, pretty laughter and the click-clack of ladies' high-heeled boots. And downy college lads and pig-tailed misses, with bespectacled tutors bearing Baedekers—no, *mon Dieu*, not Baedekers; doubtless American histories!—and peaceful and portly papas and mammas who vaguely remembered the great war in their extreme youth would stroll through these echoing passages pensively, hand in hand. For it would then be a public musée, this impregnable citadel, and its tragic battles a troubled dream of yesterday.

"But in the meantime," warned the colonel, laughing, "I am going to charge five francs!"

After the citadel he proceeded to show us the town, demolished beyond hope of reconstruction. Fine ancient *façades* with filigree stonework delicate as thread lace; matchless old cathedral closes of the fourteenth century designed and wrought in solid granite by a master mason who was also a master builder; fortification walls dating back to the days of the Cæsars; medieval turrets beneath which trouba-

dour soldier lovers sang ; glorious architecture of the Louis the Fourteenth period—ineffable masterpieces of structural art never to be reproduced on earth, they lay in smashed and huddled fragments on the ground.

We entered a church, its roof caved in, massive columns rent, holy statues razed, empty as an egg-shell—the result of a single cannon shot.

“*Un coup de canon*—and there you are!” the colonel commented grimly.

We sped past the Big Canal and the Little Canal, tranquil stretches of twilight water, colored like gorgeous rose windows by a liberated gleam of the westering sun ; reminiscent of Venice, with their overhanging houses, now glooming ruins whose window holes stared like sightless sockets of men blinded in battle ; past the business and the residence sections of the city, dead and desolate as the tombs of the Pharaohs ; and finally wound up to the summit of a hill whence, the colonel explained, we could obtain a comprehensive view of the havoc the Huns had wrought. And when we had gazed our fill on that tragic exhibition of arrogance and hate, the colonel, like the fine artist he was, led us into a lovely quiet garden close whose darkening air was sweet with the scent of hyacinths, violets, crocuses and spring roses. And kneeling down on the damp turf and getting out his clasp-knife he proceeded to gather us each a nosegay in honor of the event.

"For," he observed sagely, "flowers are better souvenirs than bits of iron shells."

When we wondered how he came to be possessed of a garden on this deserted hill-top among the crumbling ruins he explained it was his favorite point of observation. Knowing his love for the spot his men had secretly made this garden for him and tended it carefully and kept it in fresh bloom.

Returning to the citadel we dined once more in the famous mess room, this time with the colonel and all his officers. It was nine o'clock when we finally took leave of him, standing bareheaded in the rain to assure us of the warm pleasure we had given him! It had been an amazing day, crowded with images, emotions, events; and not least amazing was this French colonel, commanding officer of the citadel of Verdun, bubbling over with gayety and humor, filled with profound tenderness and knowledge of life, a savant, learned in history and languages, a distinguished warrior who had been tried in the fiery furnace of battle, and yet simple-hearted as a child or one of his beloved poilus.

It was long after midnight when we arrived in Nancy. Those two tiny fowls de luxe which cost eight dollars we had fallen on and devoured in the night. The following day, on our return to Paris, we learned that the battle to the north was still raging. But the Germans had been checked. Our troops, the ones we had seen moving north, were in the great

struggle too. They were being heavily gassed and shelled.

"Worse than Verdun!" said my informant, an American who had just returned from the British Front. "I saw several hundred of our fellows who had been mustard-gassed, lying in a field hospital. They lay on cots, their smarting eyes bandaged with soothing lotions, and they talked to each other in low broken whispers. It gave one a choke in the throat to see all those stalwarts lying flat, eyes bandaged, whispering to the comrades they could not see. I tell you, it made me feel mighty ugly toward the Hun! I wished some of our peace propagandists at home might see that sight, hear those low, choking whispers!"

"What were they talking about? Home? Mother? Where is my wandering boy to-night?"

The officer gave a grim laugh. "Not by a jolly jugful! They were trying to fix the exact hour of the gas attack in order to reckon how soon they'd be back in the trenches to tackle the Hun!"

This, then, was the spirit of the Americans who had entered the great fight. It was the spirit of the poilus before Verdun. It was the spirit of that indomitable colonel who had replied that one hundred and ten thousand brave lives were not too many to give for such a cause. Verdun of to-day was the heritage of these men in khaki who lay with bandaged eyes and spoke in choked whispers. And the Ver-

duns of to-morrow would be theirs by the same sign:
The conquering force of spirit controlling the conquering force of arms.

BEHIND CHATEAU-THIERRY

This is a story of causes. And those causes produced certain effects. I hope you will be patient with the causes—which, like all causes, are more or less dull—and read on until you come to the effects. There I can promise you some excitement.

When, in the midst of the March offensive, so disastrous in its initial phase, General Foch took command of the various Allied armies in France with the intention of merging those several distinct and often conflicting units into a single compact whole, one and indivisible, which should be at least as supple and cohesive as that of the foe, nobody on the outside even dimly realized how fundamental, how far-reaching would be the changes involved. For after three years and a half of fighting as separate entities each nation had rutted deeply into its own peculiar manner of waging war. England held one sector; Belgium another; France another; and when American overseas soldiers landed in France they were assigned another portion of the line in Lorraine.

And of his own particular sector each nation was

supreme lord, of both the front and the back areas, the advanced and the rear war zones. That was his terrain, his stronghold. Therein he could do as he pleased, make war as seemed to him best, without let or hindrance. Thus England built up one policy of war strategy, of transportation and hospitalization; France another; America a third. There were three autonomies, three great war chiefs, three grand headquarters. Each autonomy fought in a water-tight compartment, so to speak—water-tight so far as concerned the others; but unfortunately not water-tight to the boche.

So rigorously was this sense of independence held by each country, so distinctly did each nation cover its zone and its zone alone, that the fresh divisions held in reserve in back areas in case of a possible grand attack could not be stationed save in their own respective territories. French reserves could not be stationed in the British zone; British reserves could not be stationed in the French zone. Even if every sign pointed to a powerful massed action in one particular sector, all the neighboring sector could do was to hold mobile troops, together with trains and camions, in its own area ready to move. Naturally this caused great delay; precious time was lost in conveying troops.

For example, on March twenty-first, when the Fifth British Army fell back, fighting valiantly, before the furious onslaught of a Hun host of quad-

rupture strength, and a temporary breach was made in the line which opened the road to Paris, the French generals, Pelle and Humbert, rushed up their reserves from Picardy and Champagne. These two generals had received special instructions from the French High Command to study the different hypotheses of attack on the British Front and to hold themselves responsible for all consequences. An agreement had been entered into by the British and the French commanders, fixing the sixth day of battle as the one when the French should intervene if necessary and come to the assistance of their British allies. But so fast and furious waxed the offensive, so urgent appeared the crisis to the onlooking French generals, that it was not six days but scarcely more than that number of hours when the blue casques of the French began to appear in the frightful *mêlée* and the German flood in full drive began to be stemmed.

But it was a narrow squeak. And a good part of its narrowness consisted in the fact that fresh troops could not be held in readiness behind the danger zone, but had to be transported by camion, without their organizations behind them, often without sufficient guns or ammunition, from a long distance, and then hurled without a minute's rest into the very heart of the maelstrom. Had the French reserves been massed near at hand in the British back areas so that they could have gone immediately into action, there is no doubt that thousands of British soldiers, now German

prisoners, hundreds of wounded in hospitals, not to speak of the loss of guns, supplies and evacuation hospitals along the entire front line of that sector, would have been saved to the Allied arms. It was a bitter, grim lesson, and its price was high. But not too high to pay for a unified command.

Now in the present engagements the Germans are meeting French, British, Americans and Italians, all within a few miles upon the same sector. They are intermingled and interwoven, as the need arises, regiment by regiment, company by company, and even man by man. The old partitions have been completely torn down.

One of the most distinctive features of the old régime was the hospitalization system. Here as elsewhere each nation carried on in its own fashion. The British evolved one type of organization; the French another; the Americans a third; so that there existed side by side three separate networks of systems, each elaborate, ramified, complete, which never touched each other. In the British sector, for example, the seriously wounded are evacuated as rapidly as possible back to England, where are located most of their big base hospitals. In the French system the evacuation hospitals are dotted all along the sector a few miles behind the firing line, with their large base and convalescent hospitals scattered throughout the interior, in the Midi or down on the Riviera, far from the rude northern winds. And when the Americans

were assigned their sector in Lorraine they organized their system along similar lines.

First come the evacuation hospitals, as close up behind the Front as possible, in order to catch the wounded man within two, three or four hours of the time he falls on the field. Here he is operated on without delay, rendered fit for transportation, and then shipped to some big base farther back in the rear. As the hospital formation recedes from the advance zone of the army, and therefore from acute danger and unstable tenure arising from likelihood of capture, shelling and bombing raids, the bases grow in size and elaboration, until at some points they are vast beehives, community centers with a capacity of ten to twenty thousand beds. Between the two extremes of the formation, the evacuation hospitals just behind that invisible and most uncertain quantity called the front line and the big solid base situated some hundreds of kilometers away—between these two types there exists the greatest difference.

The base, as its name implies, is solid, immobile, permanent, steady as the Rock of Gibraltar or the skyscrapers of New York. The evacuation hospital, on the contrary, creeping up as close as possible behind the fighting forces is light, mobile, supple, easy to move, consisting largely of tents, stuff that can be loaded swiftly on trucks and motor lorries and carried away. If during a big push the line begins to

sway perilously, to strain, to crack, with breaches showing here and there, and the order comes to retire, the evacuation hospital can fold up its tents like the Arab and silently steal away, not on camels but their modern substitutes, camions, with the orderlies on the rear truck, thumb to nose, wagging derisive fingers at the oncoming boche, who if he does break through will find—just nothing at all.

That is one difference between evacuation and base hospitals. And there are others. The bases do good straight honest and honorable surgical and medical work of the type that is known in America. They have a fine régime, and this régime is rarely overturned. They are, therefore, prosaic. But an evacuation hospital is dramatic, picturesque, full of potentialities and surprises, with tragedy, comedy and broad farce competing for first place every hour in the day.

Here during a big offensive, when Allied and enemy wounded are pouring in in a continuous stream, surgeons, nurses and personnel work like fiends under a tremendous pressure, twelve, twenty-four, even forty-eight hours at a stretch. Here are to be witnessed in the operating room running fights with death as tense and thrilling as anything upon the battlefield. Sometimes the wounded man is exactly upon the great divide, hovering between life and death, an extra hair's weight capable of sending him to either side; shrapnel in his chest, his lungs full of

blood, breathing like a trumpeter, suffering from shock, exhaustion, lack of food—and still able to smile up into the surgeon's eyes and say faintly: "I'm all right, sir. Take that other poor guy. He's worse off than me."

In cases like these, three minutes more or less in the length of the operation spells all the difference between time and eternity. The surgical team works with the perfect union of a football eleven. In their white aprons, caps and masks they look like priests performing a rite. The sweat stands out on their foreheads. Their expert fingers move like lightning, yet precise, unhurried, sure.

In an operation of this kind, with life and death in the saddle and both riding hard, I have seen the assistant hold a watch on the operating team, as if it were a horse race, and call aloud the minutes, thus: "Three! Five! Seven! Ten!" Two minutes too long, and the patient may expire on the table, or die of pneumonia from the added strain of ether on the lungs. Here margins are short and time more precious than the weight of iron in rubies.

Here also is to be seen what is known as the new war surgery. The wounded men are X-rayed before entering the operating room, and the exact position of the foreign body indicated by an indelible cross on the patient's skin. Consequently the surgeons need not go delving and exploring and guessing all over the landscape, but make a clean straight dive for

the intruder. As the greatest danger in all these wounds is that of infection from the gas-gangrene germ, which infests the soil of France and therefore every particle of the soldier's clothes, and as in addition the wounded are often forced to lie twelve, twenty-four or even thirty-six hours on the field on account of a violent enemy barrage, these wounds are often badly infected by this germ before ever they reach the evacuation hospital, near as that may be. In order, then, to prevent the further spread of the poison throughout the body the wound is laid wide open, the crushed and torn tissues shorn clean away, and a big clean wound created. This is thoroughly cleansed, packed with gauze soaked in Carrel solution, after which the entire area is wrapped in compresses, solidly bandaged, strapped or splinted—and the patient is ready to be shipped a hundred miles.

From this it will be seen that it is at the outset of the game, after the man is first wounded, that the time element is most precious. Upon the speed with which an ambulance can deliver a soldier to the nearest evacuation hospital, divest him of his dirty, infected clothes and lay him on the life-saving operating table depends largely the speed of his recovery and return to the lines. Delays there are bound to be—violent shelling of trenches, back areas or cross-roads, which may block every form of transportation for hours. And it is to counteract these unavoidable delays that evacuation hospitals are creeping

closer and closer up to the Front, risking bombardment and air raids in order to save a greater percentage of life and limb.

Behind these hospitals, then, stand the big solid bases, imposing, safe and sane. In front of them is still another formation. Briefly, it is something like this: A soldier is wounded on the field, in the trenches, in a wood. If alone, he applies his own first aid. If he has given it away to a comrade, he uses his belt for a tourniquet, his bootlaces—anything. If he cannot get at his wound or if he is knocked unconscious, he lies until he is picked up by friend or foe. If he is not picked up he “goes West,” joining the great host of immortal comrades, and all is well. That is the first step, where each individual attends to himself, is attended to by others or is lost.

The second step consists of getting him to a dressing station, usually in some *abri*, where he is bandaged, given a hot drink, an injection of anti-tetanus serum, and an iodine cross is marked on his forehead to indicate that he has received the same. If he is suffering acutely he is in addition given a morphia tablet. After this he is transported by ambulance to the divisional field hospital, where if he is in good condition he is not even unloaded but sent straight on to the evacuation hospital a few miles farther back. Thus he receives personal, regimental and divisional first aid before ever he strikes the evacuation hospital.

All of which, if he is lucky, he may get inside of

two or three hours, and be safely tucked away in his cot coming out from under ether, raving not of home and mother but of going over the top, shouting in stentorian accents: "Shoot 'em to hell, boys! The dirty skunks! Shoot 'em to hell!" to the infinite delight of his comrades in the tent ward, who cheer him on: "That's the stuff, buddy! Attaboy! Eat 'em alive!"

Finally, after much batting of wobbly eyelids, he opens his eyes feebly upon the white-capped nurse at the foot of the bed and murmurs in weak flat tones of pleasure: "Well, hello, chicken! How'd you ever git here? Gosh! That's a foul taste in my mouth. Say, can a guy spit in this place?" And if he has come through thus far alive the chances are he will stick. He is the stuff that survives.

This sketches in the large the hospital formation that the American Army built to care for its wounded behind the Lorraine sector under the old régime. All of the units, the string of evacuation hospitals, base hospitals and transportation facilities were designed and constructed on the principle of America's holding that particular sector.

And then, presto, General Foch took command.

That simple statement merits an entire paragraph all to itself, for it wiped out the old order and engendered a whole new realignment of policies and plans—in hospitalization especially. For manifestly if American troops were to be shifted here and there,

up and down the Western Front as the need rose—as they must indeed be shifted if the Allied army was to be as swift and mobile as that of the foe—then a hospital formation away over east in the Lorraine country was not going to be a great advantage to American troops fighting up north round Montdidier and Château-Thierry. Nor could the American Army all at once, by the wave of a magic wand, conjure into being another system. And even if it could there would still remain the question of conflicting French and American traffic over already congested lines.

Yet something had to be done to cover this situation, and done at once, for our troops were already on the move. The French command, in collaboration with the American command, solved it in the only possible fashion. It was decreed that when American troops fought in a French sector the wounded should be evacuated along with the French through the French system; when they fought with the British their wounded should be evacuated with the British to England. And so the affair stood.

Americans went up to the British Front in Flanders. They went to the French Front in Picardy and Champagne. They stayed at home on their own Front in Lorraine. And the wounded began to be evacuated by all three systems. So far, so good. And yet, not altogether good. Good perhaps from a purely military point of view; not so good from a

human point of view. For the Americans in the French hospitals were lonesome. There was no use blinking the fact. They did not do well. Hearing never a word of their own language, unable to make their wants known, unable also to comprehend the soft babble of words by which the gentle French sisters tried to express their sympathy, they sickened, not so much from their wounds as from pure nostalgia and longing for the familiar home tongue.

And one man died. But while he was ill in that strange hospital in a foreign land he kept a little journal which he called *The Philosophy of Loneliness*. From that little book of scribbled notes it appeared that this young soldier grieved and grieved for lack of someone to speak to him in his own tongue. And at last, when his isolation became intolerable, he decided to rise up and go in search of human companionship. But the tall woman in black, with the black veil, like one of the Fates, kept thrusting him back into bed. Her hands were gentle but strong. He told her, quite simply, that he only wanted somebody to talk to. She replied with a torrent of strange unintelligible sounds. And then he shouted aloud, in order to drown her babble and hear some good honest American speech.

It was no use; she could not comprehend; she held him down, gently but firmly, pouring out over his fainting soul the soft strange babble of sounds. He swooned under the torment. The next day he tried

again. Again the tall black-veiled figure thrust him down with hands that were gentle but strong. Again the hated sounds. Again he swooned. The third day, very weak but resolute, he recorded in his journal his intention to try once more, and strove to rise. But over him, as ever, was that black unyielding figure, holding him down; and so she held him, gentle, ruthless, unknowing, babbling into his ears those strange sounds until he died.

In comment upon this incident Major Perkins, Chief Commissioner for Europe of the Red Cross, said: "When I read the few pitiful pages of that journal of one of our men who had gone to his end in utter loneliness of soul I decided that something must be done. Either Americans must have their own hospitals or else we must put American nurses into French hospitals."

Accordingly American women, nurses, visitors and aids, were assigned to fifty-two French hospitals containing American men. One day it chanced in a certain French hospital that one of these aids, a bright, pretty girl, was working in a ward. And as she moved here and there, busy at her tasks, she sang softly under her breath the following cheerful ditty:

*"Where do we go from here, boys?
Oh, where do we go from here?"*

"I don't want you to go anywhere from here!"

came an abrupt voice from a bed behind her. Turning she beheld a wounded American, a pale newcomer, regarding her from inflamed, bloodshot eyes.

"Well," she replied, laughing, "I don't intend to go anywhere this very minute. What's the matter with your eyes? Gassed?"

"Nothing," he replied laconically. "I've not slept for seventy-two hours. They shelled us up there for three days. That's where I got mine. I've been lying here watching you for an hour and trying to make up my mind which I wanted to do most—go to sleep or go on looking at you. And I decided I'd rather go on looking at you. I don't know," he added wistfully, "whether you consider that much of a compliment or not?"

"I consider it the finest compliment I ever had in my life, bar none—from a man who hasn't slept for seventy-two hours."

"Yes, but I haven't seen an American girl for five months. And so I figured it would rest my eyes more to look at you than it would to go to sleep."

This is not an extraordinary case. Nine men out of ten would have felt the same. Their eyes were starved for the sight of American girls. But one woman spread out among many men did not go far. It was like trying to spread a small pat of butter over an acre of bread. However, it was the best best that could be done. French hospitals could not

be crammed with American workers. There was no place to put them. Their plants were already swamped with overwork.

In the meantime the Army and the Red Cross were not idle. It was felt that something must be done not only for the morale of the lonely American soldiers but also to relieve the tremendous pressure on the French system, which was handling the wounded of three nations. Accordingly the Army went on a still hunt, not any the less urgent because it was still, for hospitals already equipped and in action that could be used for this new American sector. That sector, roughly described, extended from Amiens on the north down to Château-Thierry, and then eastward to Rheims, with Paris in a direct line to the rear. Paris, then, became the logical point for base hospitals. The American Army would depend, according to agreement, upon French evacuation hospitals immediately behind the lines, but as soon as possible it would convey its wounded back to Paris and thus relieve the congestion in the front zone.

But how to get hold of any hospital? Fortunately the Red Cross, the emergency department of the Army, had a nucleus of hospitals already to hand. This nucleus was composed of some half dozen plants—some large, some small, some militarized, some civilian, but all in excellent running condition. In addition to this group it had in its warehouses in

complete readiness for just such a crisis whole hospital units, complete in every detail, from tents down to the final safety-pin, ready to put into the field at any point the Army should designate. Moreover, it had the camions for transportation and the surgical teams and nurses at hand for instant summons by telephone.

All this preparation had been done months before. Now this fine intensive long-sightedness began to yield its excellent fruit. For the Army gave orders to these hospitals to double, treble, quadruple their bed capacity and to hold themselves free for instant action. This was done. Just outside Paris another Red Cross tent hospital sprang into being. It sprang up almost overnight, with more than a thousand beds, its white tents dotting the field like mushrooms.

In Europe the Red Cross has achieved an almost fantastic reputation for efficiency and speed—those two most commonplace factors of every successful business concern in America—and in this particular crisis, grave beyond all other crises so far as the welfare of our own fighting forces was concerned, it was going to need every ounce it possessed of both of those qualities. It was going to have the opportunity of saving hundreds of American lives. It did not know it. The Army did not know it. Nobody knew it. But so it was to be. A catastrophe was impending.

You have not read thus far, I hope, without realizing the supreme, the vital importance of those evac-

uation hospitals crouching up there close behind the fighting lines. They are the life savers. Upon their nearness to the Front and the speed with which the wounded are delivered depend the success of the entire hospital system. They are the keystone of the arch. Let an army lose its string of evacuation hospitals and it loses not merely its physical property—a mere bagatelle—but also the power to save a large percentage of its wounded. For delay causes infection; infection causes amputation, and too often causes death.

To summarize briefly the elements of the situation: America, in common with the other Allies, had her own hospital system behind the Lorraine Sector, and when our troops moved up into the French sector it was agreed that the wounded should be evacuated through French hospitals; to relieve the tremendous pressure a nucleus of Red Cross hospitals in Paris was constituted to drain this area.

And now perhaps, with these cards in your hands, and in your head the general outlines of the May offensive, recalling especially the fact that the Germans made an advance in that very sector of more kilometers than I like to recall, you may have a glimmering of the nature of the blow that fell. Yes, the French lost a certain number of their front-line evacuation hospitals. They were in the area and they were captured. That was the catastrophe.

It is the catastrophe that always happens when a

considerable slice of territory is lost. It is what happened in Italy. It is what happened to the British in March. It is what had often happened to the French. Now it was happening to the Americans. And that is why I am writing about it. What made the situation more acute was that the French were handling all of the wounded for that sector. Their remaining hospitals were rapidly being swamped. Each day the combat raged with increasing violence. What was to be done with our men? Transport them clear back to Paris? There was no other course. It was bitter hard, but inevitable. And the Army was mighty glad to have this port in the storm.

And now let us glance for a moment at Château-Thierry and see what was taking place up there. On May thirtieth, upon this portion of the line the French were retreating, and two American divisions were swung in to stem, momentarily, the tide. All the world knows now which those two divisions were, for their exploits received the congratulations of General Pershing and of the French High Command. On June first, in they came, the first lot, twenty-four trainloads—fresh, cool, gay, hard-headed youngsters. They came with no organization behind them; not an American Army hospital in the sector; not an ambulance; not even a field dressing station. They came with nothing but the packs on their backs and their rifles in their hands—and five hours later they were holding the line.

On their way up, as they were being rushed through, their trains stopped at a station which we shall designate as X——. Here lay several hundred British wounded waiting for a train to the rear. For it is one of the ugly necessities of war that, during an offensive, fresh guns and men take precedence over those who have been knocked out. And so these British wounded lay scattered about on litters in the station, on the platforms, on the grounds.

First aid they had received, but nothing more. Their condition was piteous. At the arrest of the trains the Americans clambered down briskly from their places and began relieving the immediate wants of these unfortunates.

"Maybe I'd best clear my poor chaps out of here," said an anxious British medical officer to an American captain. "The sight of them may disturb your men."

"On the contrary," replied the American grimly, "it's the best thing that could happen. It'll put the iron into their soul."

And it did. Even the Hun was amazed at the sternness of that American reception committee. For though the bombardment was heavier than that during the height of the Verdun offensive, the shells falling like iron hail less than five feet apart, with a low raking machine-gun fire that moved with automatic precision up and down the field, and the hurricane of high explosives and shrapnel and gas created

an inferno compared to which Gettysburg was as calm as the Elysian Fields—yet those American troops did not falter.

Step by step they disputed every foot of advance, clinging close to the ground, fighting for hours against an enemy six times their superior. The Germans pushed, pushed again and kept on pushing. Assault succeeded assault, wave followed wave, each one more formidable as the Germans waxed wroth at the check. But the Americans held on; they dug in with their spades; they remanned their guns as their gunners fell, wiping out each successive enemy wave; they even reached out on either wing and retrieved nests of batteries in the woods, and from these fresh points of vantage they popped away at the astounded and bewildered Hun, who could not believe that two divisions alone, and only parts of these, were blocking his advance.

But as a matter of fact those two divisions were not alone. The whole United States of America stood solidly behind them, shoulder to shoulder, a vast shadowy host, warming their hearts and strengthening their blows.

Now these troops had been planted at that particular point in the line merely to plug for the moment the passage while the French took up new defensive positions in the rear. But these aggressive, mordant young allies did not conceive that merely to stem the boche tide was the whole of their duty. They

dreamed better than that. So after surprising the enemy by their tenacity and cheek they proceeded to sail in on a lively counter-attack of their own and drive the intruder back. And drive him back they did, with a nerve, a grit, a kind of brisk keen joyousness, intrinsically western, that brought down the applause of the world. It was in fact a superb bit of fighting. And the best part of it all was that the men did not consider they had done anything fine or out of the way. That was on June first, second and third.

A wounded machine gunner, with a hole through his chest, gave me his explanation of their valor.

"It was like this," he said: "In those training camps back in the States they taught us a lot of things about war. And when we came over on this side they taught us a whole lot more. Seems like we learned about everything there was to know. But one thing they didn't teach us."

He paused, matter-of-factly, to cough up some blood.

"What was it they didn't teach you?" I asked.

"They didn't teach us how to quit. And so we didn't. We just kept on going!" He added reflectively: "It's their artillery that counts. Get those Dutchmen up close and there's nothing to them. We fought them off their feet."

It was the veritable truth.

But it is not to be conceived that this was a blood-

less victory. The first day of June a thin stream of crimson began to trickle to the rear from the wounded American Army. And those first days that thin crimson stream trickled all the way from Château-Thierry to Paris, a distance of fifty-one miles, without intervention or hospital care. One Red Cross hospital there was, indeed, but soon this was swamped. Men with nothing beyond first-aid bandages began pouring into the Paris hospitals. It was one of those inevitable conditions of war that are bound to occur when evacuation hospitals are lost.

Close up behind the Front the French evacuation hospitals, diminished in number, crippled in resources, were already glutted with British, French and American wounded and gassed. They lay on litters in the corridors, the doorways, the verandas, and overflowed into the yards and along the roadsides. Several American women canteeners came to help the French in this dire emergency. They found most of the personnel of one hospital already flown, the town being under direct shell fire. And for several days in that swamped hospital, together with a few brave French doctors and nurses, these American volunteers toiled like impassioned fiends day and night; ran the kitchen, cooked the meals, served out hot coffee, bathed the wounded, bandaged fresh amputations, held up dying heads, wrote letters, injected morphine, assisted at operations, and continued their labors tirelessly hour after hour, in an atmosphere of inde-

scribable filth, impregnated with the odors of gas gangrene.

Twice, two nights in succession, the Red Cross representative in that sector tore at full speed down to Paris, returning with a camion load of surgical supplies, ether and bandages. And when they arrived such was the pressure of the hour that the surgeons themselves ran out from their operating tables, dived their hands down into the precious box, caught up an armload and ran back, shouting directions over their shoulders.

It was during this period of stress that a noble idea occurred to the Red Cross representative, which he proceeded to act upon at once.

A short distance away was an abandoned French hospital, empty, its beds scarce cold. He drove over and asked to rent it.

"What for?" demanded the French authorities.

"To use for our American wounded. To relieve the pressure. To take them off your hands."

And he struck a bargain then and there. That accomplished, once more he scorched the road to Paris. This time he loaded up fifteen tons of stuff—one of those complete hospital units the Red Cross had stored in its warehouses against just such a crisis as this. That unit contained tents, beds, bandages, nitro-oxide plants, ether, instruments, and the entire equipment for three surgical teams. By telephone, surgeons and nurses were summoned to hurry

out by automobile. The representative himself hastened back to the other end. But while he was still on the way, by one of those swift military changes the hospital he had rented became untenable by reason of a shift of the American troops into another army zone.

So now he had an outfit, but no plant. Nothing daunted, for in his automobile he was still a lap or so ahead of his slower convoy, he started to comb the countryside for another hospital. And so successful were his efforts that by the time his material caught up with him he was able to direct it to a new location. Then came the installation of the plant. A château had been taken over for headquarters, operating and X-ray rooms. Behind the house in a fair open field back by cool pine woods were ranged the hospital tents, each with a capacity of about fifty beds.

And now began a piece of spectacular teamwork. A detachment of soldiers began policing—cleaning up—the grounds; the nurses in the operating room commenced to boil their instruments; the sergeant began tacking up on the valuable tapestried walls lengths of white oilcloth; in the kitchen, the deep-seated heart of it all, the dietitian had already started the fire and marshaled her minions; the night teams of surgeons donned caps and aprons—and when a gray dust-covered army limousine raced up and the chief surgeon of that sector crisply demanded “How

soon do you figure you can handle some wounded?" the commanding officer of the new evacuation hospital responded: "As soon as you like. Shoot 'em right along!"

And inside of an hour the army ambulances began to roll in and the stretcher bearers began to lift out the litters with the recumbent immobile figures, wrapped in blankets and many of them caked with mud and blood.

On June first the Americans began to attack. By June fourth this new Red Cross evacuation hospital had been installed behind Château-Thierry and was operating day and night on Americans only. And thus the thin stream of crimson, which for three days had trickled from the front lines practically without interruption clear back to Paris, was abruptly tourniqueted. It was a fine piece of emergency work and an excellent example of the complete collaboration between the Army and the Red Cross. The preparedness of this latter organization, its warehouses stacked to the roof with extra supplies so that it could multiply its entire hospital bed capacity by six without a strain; its camion service ready to transport these goods to any designated point in the advance zone; and these two facilities, materials and transportation put absolutely at the command of the Army in a vital and trying hour went far to avert what might have been a tragedy.

It was a brilliant sunshiny day when I arrived at

this Red Cross evacuation hospital behind Château-Thierry. At the moment there was a lull on the Front. Twice during the month of June the Germans had sought by means of smoke barrages and pontoons to cross the Marne, that river of ill omen to Prussian hopes, and twice the Americans had held them. And so aggressively had these gay yet austere youngsters fought that it was a common jest along that sector that the Kaiser was seeking peace terms.

There were now other units there, and they divided the honors with the veteran poilus who flanked them on either side.

The hospital itself, situated in a splendid grove of pines and purple beeches, was by this time operating as smoothly as if it had been established months instead of days. The entire bed capacity of that plant I may not give, but an idea of its elasticity may be obtained from the fact that upon one night, after an evacuation, the patients numbered three, and upon a subsequent night, during a rush, the kitchen fed more than nine hundred persons and showed no signs of pegging out.

Upon the afternoon of my arrival patients were scattered throughout many of the wards, bringing up the total to quite a considerable figure. In company with the commanding officer, Major M——, I had gone the rounds of the tents. Suddenly in the midst of a remark he was called to the telephone.

It was long distance—that is to say, it was some

headquarters up behind the lines. The major returned with a sober face.

"It's an order," said he, "to clean out everybody, make a clean sweep, get ready the beds. I suppose you can guess what that means."

"An attack?"

"Well, I dare say the boche will try to pull off something. They've been massing up behind Château-Thierry now for days. But they're not the only ones that have been massing, and don't you forget it. Our men on this side the Marne are lying in wait, a cordial little reception party, and if some of their scoundrels do cross the river they'll never live to tell the tale!" He laughed—the cheerful buoyant laugh of utter confidence which prevails upon the Front. "But this order means that we'll evacuate this evening. It's better for the men, even the serious cases, to be sent back to a quiet base where they can have constant attention; they must have it, and we can't possibly give it to them here. In the midst of a big fight our hands are full with the fresh influx. Moreover, it stands to reason that the sooner we can get a patient in fit shape to travel out of this cyclone belt the better it is for all concerned. And yet it's the hardest thing in the world to let some of these men go. Some are special cases where we've fought for their lives. We'd like to guard them through the critical stage. As for the nurses, they cry like babies when they have to surrender some of their pets.

You'll see to-night. Just watch my staff; see if they don't try to hang on to some of the men."

This was about five in the afternoon. He disappeared into the château to have a conference with his head nurse upon supplies. A few minutes later, Colonel X——, chief surgeon of all the American forces in that center, stepped down from his limousine, and the first words with which he greeted the major were these: "How many beds have you filled?"

The major gave the budget of the day.

"Well, clean them right out. If you've not sufficient ambulances, send down the line to X——. But get the men out of here to-night. Get your beds free. What about supplies—enough to stand a pretty big racket? How are you on ether?"

Major M—— gave the account of his plant. Everything was in perfect readiness for the storm.

"Fine!" pronounced the colonel. "Well, I've got to beat it. This is my busy day."

"Just when and where do you think the Germans are going to attack?" I ventured to put in my oar.

The colonel looked me up and down with a whimsical smile. Women are rare phenomena in the landscape of the Front. When they do arrive so far from their natural habitat, the safe and sober rear, it is taken for granted they are there with just and sufficient cause, and they are treated with a deference, a consideration and a fine camaraderie that are good to experience.

"If I knew the exact reply to your very pertinent question," laughed he, "I'd not be standing here; I'd be burning the road to G. H. Q.; and we'd put something over on the boche to remember us by. As it is, we can only say things seem mighty imminent. They're massing guns and effectives. So are we. Just where the point of the thrust will come no man can say. Your guess is as good as mine. But we've got to be ready. And we are! Wait. I'll show you something. But you mustn't put it in the Post!"

Whereupon he sat himself down, hauled out his secret map and his secret notebook—a small black, leather-bound affair, in which were jotted cryptic figures representing positions and numbers of American forces which a German spy would have bartered his worthless soul to possess; and with these two, the map and the notebook, he outlined his plan of campaign in the event of a German drive. Here and there were troops, American troops. Here and there behind them were American hospitals, each one capable of caring for so many wounded each day. All together they represented an ample bed capacity. Those first unorganized days of June were well over; by now the Army had arranged a hospital system that effectively drained the sector. And not only that—alternative positions had been located in case the evacuation hospitals had to clear out and reinstall farther to the rear. Every emergency had been planned for. All was indicated on that secret map.

"By the way, major," concluded the colonel, snapping to his little black notebook as he rose, "how soon could you up-stakes and move?"

The major stated the exact number of hours, and when I say that that number amounted to less than three hundred minutes you may realize how simple and supple are the component parts of such a plant. "I'll have the sergeant get out the tent bags," he added, "and stack them outside the tents."

"May as well be ready," agreed the colonel, stepping into his car. "Not that there's the slightest chance in the world that the boche will break through, but it would be criminal not to be prepared."

"We'll be prepared, sir," promised the major quietly.

"Good. They may start something about two in the morning. So long!"

"That's two warnings," said the major amusedly as the colonel's car rolled away.

Later, at mess out in the château grounds in a tent, with the westering sun over behind the dark pine woods, a great globe of fire drowning the fields and the tents in a fine golden light, we received a third. This time it came in the form of a note from the French headquarters hard by. It was in French and it read:

"We have the honor to announce to you that an important German attack is hourly expected in our sector. It will be advisable for you to evacuate in-

stantly as many patients as you possibly can, in order to have the greatest number of beds free for the emergency."

"Looks as if the boche really meant business," commented the major. "Do you care to watch the evacuation? If so I recommend the rear steps of the château as a good reviewing stand."

I took my place as directed, well removed from the traffic. Upon the road beneath just in front of the hospital tents were lined up a long string of ambulances. A sergeant was in charge of the affair. Inside the tents, orderlies and nurses had their hands full preparing the men for transportation. Some of the patients were up, superintending their own moving; some, in vivid pink-striped Red Cross pajamas—the gift of some gay soul—were sitting on their cots, swinging bare legs and shouting for foot-gear; some, disdaining such effete trappings of civilization, had wrapped the drapery of their couches about them, squaw-wise, and were standing barefoot on the grass outside enjoying the festal scene. It was like a great gipsy encampment.

Still farther down the road one man had boldly snatched another's sole garment of attire, a dressing robe, and the owner, reduced to his birthday suit, started a chase. Ensued a picturesque race. This, however, was but a brief kaleidoscopic film, which danced across the road for a minute like a Greek frieze, and was abruptly censored by the sergeant.

A nurse appeared at the flap of the tent, an anxious look in her eye. She caught sight of the tall statue-like Indian who, with his blanket hunched well round his head and his pyjamas swelling gently in the evening breeze, stood rubbing one big bare foot luxuriously over the other big bare foot and discoursing to another young Indian buck thus:

"Yes, sir, I'm telling you, friend, I sure thought the end had come. 'There I was, sitting under a little short tree by the road writing home to my mother. I'd just finished writing 'Well, mamma, I've come through lucky so far,' and looked up. There was a whole wagonload of grenades passing, and at that minute a shell burst in the road right ahead. And I'm telling you, friend, suddenly it seemed like all the world rose up in the air but me——"

"You, Fred Murphy," interrupted the nurse severely. "Where are those slippers I gave you? Don't you know you can't travel in bare feet? It isn't done in France!"

"Miles too small for my trilbies," explained Murphy succinctly. He turned his face toward her a brief instant and then, turning it back, continued without a halt: "——but me, and I went down. And when the lieutenant helped me to my feet he said that nobody but a damn fool or a Marine could sit under a little short tree like that writing letters while a whole wagonload of grenades exploded, and get away with it. And he showed me the tree top blown clear

down the valley and sitting up there like an open umbrella."

A medical officer came hurrying over to the nurse.

"The orderly said you wanted me. What is it?"

"It's that chest case. He can't go. He's on the list, but there must be some mistake. Oh, I think it's terrible to send a man on the road like that!"

They passed into the deeper gloom of the tent. I followed. Near the door on a cot sat a doughboy, a shoulder case, garbed as per army regulation as far as his waist, and from thence upward his fine torso naked save for strappings and splints which held his arm in an immobile apparatus.

With his free hand he was pawing wildly among the effects of his kit, while he exclaimed in loud excited tones, "I can't find it! I never got it. If I had it I'd remember it, wouldn't I? Say, wouldn't a guy remember a thing like that? I guess yes! You never gave it to me—see?"

The orderly—later killed when the hospital was bombed by boche planes—was down on his haunches lacing up the patient's boots. He looked up with a grin.

"What's biting you, buddy? The last thing I gave you was slum, and I notice you wolfed that down like one o'clock."

"It's my shrapnel. The piece the doctor took outa me. He promised before he put me to sleep on the

operating table to pin it onto my shirt. Say, look in my pocket, will you?"

The orderly obliged. But the shrapnel was not there. Just then the doctor passed. "Say, captain, did you operate on this guy? He says you promised to save his shrapnel."

The doctor squinted uncertainly through the gloom.

"Yes, sir, you did!" affirmed the private with confidence. "And you promised, sir, to pin the shrapnel onto my shirt."

"That's right. I remember now, old man." A look passed between the young surgeon and the orderly. Was it a wink that caused the orderly's left eyelid to droop so flat upon his cheek?

"Sir, shall I go get his shrapnel? I think I know where it's at."

"Good!" said the surgeon, laughter in his voice. "You'll find it wrapped in a piece of gauze."

"Yes, sir."

The orderly departed. But just outside the tent he paused, dived down into his pocket, brought up several objects, examined them attentively, and then hurried back to the rear entrance, where by the light of an electric torch the nurse was making up her list.

"S-s-t! Gimme a gauze compress, sister!" said a husky voice in her ear. Absently she pointed to a parcel on the table. The orderly helped himself.

The next moment he was back in the front tent.

"Here you are, buddy! That'll hold you for a while!" And he deposited an object twisted up in a bit of gauze in the soldier's eager palm. It was a copper bullet the size of a marble.

"Oh, boy!" ejaculated the private in deep ecstatic joy. "She's a whale! A regular Big Bertha! No wonder she stopped me. Say, captain," he hailed the surgeon who was passing, "can't I go back to my outfit? I don't want to lose that gang. And I feel fine."

The orderly chuckled as he warped his man's free arm into the flannel shirt. "Feel so darned nifty you'd like to go out and chop down a couple or three trees just for sport—hey?"

Outside, upon the road, the ambulances were loading rapidly and rumbling off into the gloom. The sergeant, the man of the hour, oversaw all.

"Gently there!" This to the brancardiers as they lifted a litter with a recumbent figure swathed in blankets and shot it into the ambulance. "You have three in there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, beat it! Now how many more are there left?"

From the steps of the château Major M——, in white cap and operating apron, surveyed the scene. The procession passed briskly.

Ambulances rolled up, loaded and disappeared.

Not a light showed. The men were mere dusky patches of gloom moving through denser gloom. Overhead the sky was equally dark, fitting the earth close, like the stopper of a bottle.

"I wonder how it feels," I said, "to be lying in the little black interior of those ambulances and rumbling off to God knows where."

"Sometimes very dramatic things happen in those same little black interiors," observed the major grimly.

An orderly approached, saluted the major.

"Sir, there's a light shining out of one of the upper windows. It makes quite a projection. One of the drivers marked it far down the road."

"Go up and tell the nurse to close the shutter," commanded the major tersely. "Tell her to go all over the house. We don't want a bomb dropped in the midst of this party."

"Have you ever had any disagreeable experiences with wounded German prisoners?" I inquired.

"We've not had many of their wounded, but one night we got in a Prussian lieutenant. I put him in a tent with a bunch of Germans, all in pretty bad shape. He shouted and swore like a trooper for being subjected to the hideous ignominy of having to breathe the same polluted air as his men. 'Twas an American atrocity! He said he was a Prussian officer, and he haughtily demanded to be changed to an officers' ward."

"And what did you do? Assign him to a private room with a special nurse and send up iced champagne?"

"Something like that! I ordered his cot changed, and I placed him between two poor German devils who were dying of gas gangrene. They smelled to heaven! I thought if our own nurses could tend to those fellows it might do his lord-highmightiness good to lie between 'em for a while! In contrast to his conduct I had a young American lieutenant out in one of the tents, Ward B, and it was not until he was evacuated that I learned he was an officer.

"‘Why, lieutenant,’ I said, ‘why didn’t you tell me? I’d have placed you in the officers’ ward.’

"‘Oh, that’s all right, sir,’ he laughed. ‘What’s good enough for my men is good enough for me.’ And that is the difference in a nutshell between autocracy and democracy."

One of the medical staff approached hurriedly. "Sir, I'd like to keep some few of these cases. They're in bad shape. I hate to start them on the road. It—it's against my conscience."

"All right. Use your own discretion. You heard the orders, though—to make a clean sweep. It may seem hard, but the men will receive better attention than we'll be able to give them once the rush begins. But keep them if you feel you should."

With a breath of relief the officer turned away to countermand his order.

"Sergeant!" called the major.

"Here, sir!" came a steady reliable voice from the dark.

"Put all the wounded that are left into one tent—Ward A. How many have you?"

"About twenty-five, sir."

"Good. Tell your men to clean up all the rest of the wards and get them into condition. And, sergeant——"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are those tent bags—the ones in which we pack the tents?"

"Upstairs in the storeroom, sir."

"Get them down. Place one outside each tent and instruct your men in their use. Maybe you'd better assign a patrol on this road to-night."

"Yes, sir. The officer of the day has already spoken to me about it, sir."

"All right, sergeant. Then I guess we're about ready for whatever may turn up. You'd better try to snatch some sleep."

"I think I'd rather stay up, sir, if you don't mind."

The sergeant saluted. We went inside. Already the surgeons and the nurses had sought their respective quarters to summon what sleep they might before the storm broke. I said good night also, and was conveyed to my billet in the village, the major promising to have me roused if anything occurred. By now the sky was clear, a deep soft firmament of

gleaming stars which blinked friendly reassurance to the troubled earth atom below.

"It's all right!" they seemed mutely to say. "See, we're still here! It's all right!"

The wind was toward the Germans. Therefore, though already the big guns had waked to their nightly orchestra, and vivid lightninglike flashes from their flaming throats played constantly across the low horizon, yet not a single sound could be heard. All through the night, when at intervals I rose to watch, that leaping devil's dance played noiselessly across the rosy sky. It was uncanny—lightning without thunder. Where was the sound? In the upper air reaches?

The next morning I woke to discover I had not been called. The drive, then, had not materialized. At the hospital I found that such was even the case. There was a smile in the air, and a whisper that the Americans, the previous night, had dumped twelve thousand gas shells down upon the Hun just as he was clambering over the top. The push for the moment was averted. Nevertheless a few wounded were trickling in, and upstairs in the officers' ward I found two bed-fast lieutenants. One, by his soft velvety drawl, was a Southerner. Later I learned his exact habitat was Memphis, Tennessee. The other young officer apparently had been recounting some knavery of the boche, for with my hand on the open door I heard the Tennessean respond fervidly: "Yes, suh.

They're dirty snakes. You can't have no commerce with them. Yuh just got to kill their souls!"

I drew back and listened, for the Tennessean was beginning a tale.

"Yes, suh," his cool, placid voice flowed on, "they was murderin' us in that woods. They'd got us in a pocket and from nests of machine guns they was shellin' us three ways. We'd had no meat for over two days. It was tough, I'm tellin' yuh, suh. So that night I took my sergeant and went foraging in the village. It was deserted and the shells was fallin' right lively. Presently I shoved open the door of a barn, and there was a fine fat hawg rooting away inside.

"Sergeant," I says, "that hawg in there tried to bite me."

"Well, suh," says the sergeant, "there ain't no French hawg born that can bite my lieutenant and get away with it. We-all ain't going to stand that from no hawg. No, suh!" And so that night we had a fine mess of po'k chops. Yes, suh, those po'k chops certainly tasted grand."

I slipped inside to have a look at the *raconteur*. He was a tall, lean, lank, freckled, solemn-looking young gentleman, with a broken ankle and a quizzical brown eye. Somehow he reminded me of Lincoln.

"Yes, suh," he was remarking, "this sure is one damn funny man's wah." After I had established

myself I demanded what led him to such a cynical conclusion. But he refused to be drawn, and asked instead the condition of a patient in the adjoining shock ward. I told him the man was dead.

"I'm sure sorry to heah that," he said simply. "That man was in my outfit and a bettah boy never spit. He got his after I came in. I left a squad of five in a dugout on the side of a knoll and I told them not to stir until the shelling let up. Well, this boy says it got pretty hot and crowded inside and he stepped out a minute to breathe. And that very minute a shell dropped. He might have saved his life if he'd bandaged his leg right off; but no, suh, he told me he couldn't think of nothing but hauling those poor fellows from that caved-in wreck—and him with one leg blowed off. That boy deserves a Croix de Guerre. I'm goin' to write to his mothah."

I was called away for a few minutes, and when I returned the lieutenant was embarked upon another tale:

"Yes, suh, I just couldn't bear to see that boy's body lyin' out in the blisterin' sun. By the clothes he was a Marine, and I expect he'd been hangin' up against that bob-wire some time. I didn't care if it was No Man's Land. It wasn't no fit land for an American's body to be lyin' out in the sun, and so I started out to fetch it in.

"'Lemme go, lieutenant!' one of my outfit says.

I've got the finest outfit of boys, miss, you ever laid eyes on."

"Maybe that's because they've got such a fine lieutenant!" I said slyly.

"No, suh, that isn't it at all!" he retorted earnestly. "Well, I says to him: 'Man, I can't ask for volunteers for this. It's too danged dangerous.' And that boy, he says to me: 'Shucks, lieutenant! I'll die for yuh any day with pleasure. But for God's sake, don't leave me lie out there like a dawg.' So I promised, and he went out and fetched the Marine in. Two hours later that boy was shot straight between the eyes by a sniper's bullet. I remembered what he'd said: 'For God's sake, lieutenant, don't leave my body lie out like that'—and it kind of hurt my soul. So I sent him back to the rear. And we buried that boy with honahs. Yes, suh, this sure is one damn funny man's wah!"

Downstairs the hospital seemed drowned in a drowsy Sabbath calm. Not a breath stirred. Roses drooped in the hot stillness. High overhead in a light azure sky Allied planes swam like gnats across a sun-lit stretch of water. To complete the note of peace two stray hounds dreamed on the steps or snapped languidly at blue-bottle flies. Who said there was a world war on hand? And yet, late the night before, still another warning had come over the wires, and the remaining twenty-five patients had been hurriedly transported to safer climes.

Down the road thousands of camions were passing, a steady sluggish stream. The level, poplar-bordered highway was alive with them as far as the eye could see. Camions filled with French troops; camions filled with artillery, guns, guns, guns; camions filled with horses, two to a vehicle. And after that stream of blue casques had flowed by, with scarcely a minute's interval, came another stream—United States khaki, going up on the line. The heavy American lorries thundered by in a cloud of dust, their wheels tearing the gravel out of the roads. The men were covered with a coating of dust, thick as if they had come through a desert sandstorm. Their eye-lashes were powdered gray; their eyebrows were bleached white; their fresh skins were burned brick red; and their eyes, unprotected by that abominable visorless overseas cap, were inflamed with dust and fatigue and lack of sleep. And yet how they hurrahed, leaning far out to yell as they flashed by! They were going into hell, and they knew it.

They had no illusions about war. But the sight of those dirty, sweaty, confident men thrilled us.

At five, in front of the château, the chaplain read the burial service over the hero who had given his life to save his comrades in the dugout. Over the pine box lay the folds of the flag, a mantle of glory. Upon the rude casket some friend had placed a cross of crimson ramblers, the rich splendor of their hue and their fragrance symbolizing mutely the beauty

of soul of him who lay underneath. Red roses for those who die in youth for their country! They seemed to burn in the quiet air. Their fragrance mounted like rare incense. The chaplain read the immortal words of hope: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. . . ." High overhead the faint reassuring drone of Allied planes mingled with the murmur of the detachment of soldiers, who with bared heads repeated softly "Our Father who art in Heaven . . ." while off on the side lines stood a group of French children, awed, curious, respectful, with bunches of field daisies clutched tightly in their hands, with which, after the *Americains* had departed, they proposed to decorate the strange soldier's grave.

Later, in search of consolation, I wandered back to the Tennesseean's ward. I was not disappointed. That liquid drawl flowed on, soft as the Mississippi at twilight.

"Yes, suh, we called that outfit the Midnight Regiment. I reckon yuh-all heard of them; they was stationed a while at B——. They was officered with white folks, and a friend of mine was major. Well, suh, they put that regiment alongside some French niggers from Upper Africa. Yuh'd think those two sets would amalgamate, coming from the same family tree. But no, suh! There was just one perpetual uproar. They was a-hackin' and a-choppin' each up with knives from mawning until night! Yuh nevah

heard such takin's-on. And the officers couldn't find what was the row nohow. So one night the major, he says to his sergeant, a big negro:

“‘Sergeant,’ says he, ‘I want yuh to go out and make a private investigation of just what’s the trouble between yuh Americans and those French niggers, and hand in a confidential report.’

“‘I don’t need to go out and make no ’vestigation, major,’ says that sergeant. ‘I can report to yuh whut-all’s the trouble right now. Yes, suh!’

“‘All right, sergeant. What is it?’

“‘Well, suh, it’s like this: Evah since this heah Midnight Regiment come over to France and been a-takin’ part in this man’s wah, us-all’s been hearin’ the white folks talkin’ French. All the white folks gettin’ to talkin’ French. Yes, suh. And now we come up alongside these strange nigger folks and find them gabblin’ French too! And when niggers goes to gittin’ stuck up like that and puttin’ on proud white folks’ airs they’s jest naturally boun’ to be trouble! Yes, suh, that’s whut it is!’”

The afternoon shaded gently into night; the night’s dark hours slipped by, silent as bats’ wings; morning came again, calm, sunshiny—and still no threat of attack. It was ominous, menacing. The hospital staff rested with taut nerves, like a football team ready at a given signal to spring into intense action. But the signal was withheld.

Then suddenly one July morning about two o’clock

the storm burst. The atmosphere trembled and shook to the clamor of mighty guns. Even in Paris, fifty-one miles away, their deep-throated orchestra could be heard. Pluff! Pluff! Pluff-pluff! Distant, yet clear, unmistakable, sounded those soft and sinister volleys through the night. Not since the Battle of the Marne in 1914 had Parisians heard such a violent bombardment. Some flew to the telephone. Was it a Gotha raid? Was that the outer anti-aircraft barrage? No. It was the long-delayed July offensive.

THE SPITE ATTACK

The third phase of the great German offensive of 1918 began with the first light of dawn on July the fifteenth. In Paris, fifty-one miles behind Château-Thierry, that distant bombardment, violent beyond all precedent, could be distinctly heard. It could be heard, but the explosions were not like real explosions. They were like tiny, far-away echoes, ghosts of explosions—as if baseballs were being hurled with extreme force against a wall heavily padded with cotton wool. Pluff! Pluff-pluff! Pluff! Pluff! Pluff! Pluff! Distinct, yet muted, they came, those distant thuds; denatured, so to speak, with all the sound violence extracted.

Parisians rose from their beds, stepped to the windows and leaned from their casements to listen. But immediately the nearer night noises of the city eclipsed those distant ghost roars of battle. The whir of a belated taxi through the deserted streets, the hollow ring of footsteps on the pavement, even the blinking of an eyelid—and those soft sinister booms were completely blotted out. But back in bed once

more, with the windows shutting out the city sounds, the dull pounding commenced again, steady, persistent as the beat of the blood in the arteries: Pluff! Pluff-pluff! Pluff!

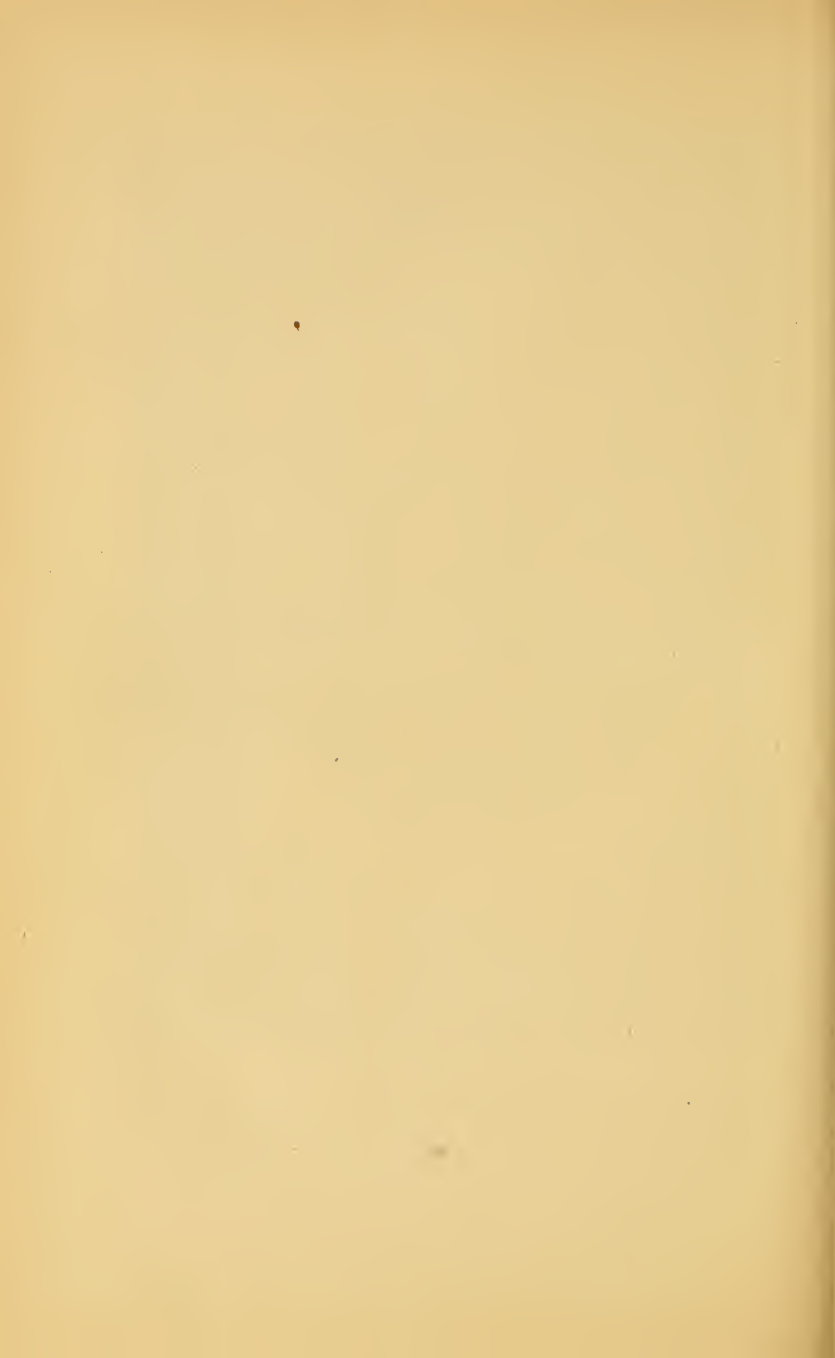
Thus at Paris, the heart of the world. But up at Château-Thierry, the seat of alarms, it was a vastly different affair. There was nothing dim, distant, dissolved, denatured or cotton-woolly about the cannonading in that sector. It was the storm center of the tornado. The air was thick with clamor. The heavy guns bellowed incessantly. In order to hear each other men had to lean close and shout, and then it was only by the lip movement that they could be understood. It was like trying to speak during the rushing thunder of an express train. The Prussian storm troops were attacking formidably, with all their immense prestige, and the Americans were responding coolly, methodically as the Concord minute-men, with machine gun and rifle.

It cannot be said that the Prussians were cowards. They had been ordered to hold their position at any cost; and they fought ferociously, until they were dropped by the bayonet. In their machine-gun pits twenty and thirty Hun gunners were found, piled in heaps, slain by the bayonet, showing they had resisted desperately to the end; and the path to those same pits could be traced by American dead. Neither side asked or gave any quarter, and in those first fierce days of the offensive few prisoners were taken.



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TENT-WARD SHOWING DAMAGE CAUSED BY GERMAN BOMBS,
THIS RED CROSS MILITARY HOSPITAL WAS BOMBED BY GER-
MAN PLANES DURING THE JULY OFFENSIVE WHILE THE
AMERICANS WERE WINNING AT CHÂTEAU-THIERRY



Despite the redoubtable blows of the famous iron-disciplined Prussian Guards and the Bavarian Reserves, shock troops alleged to be irresistible, despite also the hail of bullets and gas shells and high explosives right in their faces, the Americans started a counter-drive. The Germans had initiated this game called "drive," and now the Americans, under Foch and Pershing, were ramming that same game down their throats. And slowly the German line began to recoil. Slowly those Prussians and Bavarians, fighting like tigers, began to retire. For the first time since America's entry into the war she began to land substantial body blows upon the enemy; for the first time that enemy began to stagger under the terrible punishing force of those blows, delivered with the whole weight of a powerful angry nation behind them. The Germans had started out to stampede the Americans; the Americans retorted by stampeding the Germans—a little.

And now began two tides: one tide strong, and hourly growing stronger, sweeping the Hun back, pressing into tighter corners and hotter hells, victorious; the other tide composed of those who fell—a quiet, stricken, bloody tide, ebbing slowly toward the rear.

The hospital was waiting to receive them, surgeons and nurses in aprons and caps. In the kitchen a soldier, told off as cook, stoked the big kitchen range until it glowed incandescent on top, and the huge

marmites of coffee and cocoa disseminated a fragrant aroma through the house. Ambulances, a steady stream, began to climb the dark, wooded hill road. Two lanterns, like bright, glowing eyes, fastened on either side of the entrance gate, guided them into the grounds. In the rear of the château, in front of the admission tent, they halted; deposited their burdens—silent, immobile, blanket-swathed figures, whose white bandages showed deep crimson stains—retrieved blankets and stretchers; snatched a hasty gulp of strong black coffee, and rumbled off for another load. More drew up, unloaded, departed. And still more and more and more. What a traffic in the dead of night! The traffic sergeant gave low, terse orders. A hooded lantern gleamed here and there. Over all was the infernal voice of the cannon, and those swift, stabbing, crimson flames across the sky.

Inside the admission tent, despite the rush and the constant influx of fresh stretchers, a clean-cut order prevailed. Men, sorely wounded, rested on their litters without change for a few minutes, while their infected clothes were removed and a brief history taken, after which they were borne off by brancardiers directly to the X-ray and operating rooms. Thus with all haste and yet with all order a constant sorting went on, the serious operative cases going forward, the lighter cases remaining behind. These latter were helped into clean pyjamas, given hot soup or cocoa—some of them during the fury of

the attack had not tasted food for more than twenty-four hours—their wounds re-bandaged, and put to bed to await their turn in the long procession that led to the operating table. And some of these latter, shelled incessantly, under constant shock and stress, not having closed an eye for seventy-two hours, took the high dive into deep oblivion with the coffee cup still in their hands, and slept solidly for a night and a day on end.

The cots in the admission ward filled up. The stream of badly wounded moved forward and the fresh stream from the ambulances flowed in to its place. Everywhere could be heard a continuous low drone of conversation. There was no excitement. But neither was there silence nor sadness—though some were dying—nor groaning nor evidence of pain. They were talking, indeed, but it was noticeable that no one spoke of his wounds or his sufferings, though some had lain twenty-four hours and more on the field or in the dugouts under intense barrage before they could be brought in. But it was not of this they spoke. The battle, what had happened up there, still intoxicated them, still held their brains in thrall. They talked of horrible, grotesque, fantastic and sanguinary things in low, level dispassionate tones, as if they were discussing the weather:

“I saw my captain and my lieutenant blown straight to hell; it was a head-on collision with a high explosive. My captain was a fine fellow. He always

seen we had a place to sleep, and if there was anything to eat going we got it. I was handed one in the chest. We was creeping up on a nest of their machine guns that the dirty boches had hid in a tree. I couldn't bandage my chest wound, and I was spitting blood pretty bad, so I lay down in a shallow shell hole for the rest of the day.

"Along toward night I says to a comrade shot through the arm, who had crawled in alongside: 'Steve,' I says, 'we've got to beat it. This is getting too lively for me.' By that time the shells was busting at regular intervals at a distance of about five feet apart. No use scrouchin' down to dodge 'em; if you did you lost your interval—see? And the next one caught you straight! So we just stood up and walked along kind of slow. We made it that way for about a mile, stumbling along, not going too fast or too slow, for fear of losing that danged interval, when suddenly I flopped down. I'd been bleeding pretty freely right along.

"'Steve,' I says, 'I'm not going to make it. You hike on.'

"But he helped me to stand, and so we kind of leaned up against each other like some of these funny dead drunks you see, and staggered along until presently we saw something looming ahead. I let out a feeble little yip. It was a French machine gun right on top of us, and they was just drawing off to fire! Yes, sir! That holler, for all it was so feeble, was

the best little piece of business I ever pulled!"

Some of their stories, I am bound to say, were whoppers, and their figures as inflated as those of watered stock. They saw things heroic size. This phase of battlefield psychology is well known to war surgeons. One soldier, for example, declared his entire division had been wiped out. Another made modest mention of the fact that his company alone, single-handed, against overwhelming odds, had started the Hun on his return trip to Berlin.

"Aw, dry up!" groaned out an exasperated realist, with a grimace of pain. "You four-flushers make me sick, blowing like that!"

"Well, anyhow," retorted the youth who had boasted of his company, "we whaled 'em in that pocket!"

The realist lifted himself with labor, for a contemptuous look at the optimist.

"What's the mater with your eye?" he demanded.

"Left it on the battlefield to look after things," said the other with utter sang-froid. "What's a little private eye or two in a war of this size?"

"Well, you're no tin-horn sport!" admitted the realist grimly. And he laid himself down again.

Near the entrance to the admission tent lay a man on a stretcher, his leg bandaged above the knee. The trouser leg had been cut away, the white bandage gleamed ominously red, and down his leggings, down to the heel of his heavy boot, oozed slow drops of red

which formed a dark pool on the stretcher. His eyes were closed; his eyelids were violet; his face, under the gleam of the surgeon's torch, showed ghastly white; and a week's growth of black beard emphasized the pallor.

"Get him right up to the house," commanded the surgeon after an expert squint, not so much at the leg as at another bandage round the chest. "Have you taken his history?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then shoot him in ahead of the others. Tell the nurse to have him X-rayed at once, and pass him into the operating room. It's a long chance at that."

The brancardiers bore him away.

Down in the other wards the cots were fast filling with the gassed. For these, in an evacuation surgical hospital, nothing could be done save to remove their gas-impregnated garments, bandage their blisters and burns, feed them, rest them—and rush them on to the rear. Upon one of the beds lay a boy, gassed by phosgene. He lay in a kind of stupor, wondrously beautiful and pale, a statue carved in pure marble, the mobile boyish mouth curved in a faint smile. No visible breath. No pulse. And for him, too, rest—absolute rest.

Still the cannons thundered and their vivid flames painted momentarily the black sky. The ambulances never ceased their steady rumble. The drivers got down for a draught of hot coffee, a word with the

sergeant, and then drove off in the dark. It was an unending procession.

And now another tent down in the grounds, isolated from the others, began to be filled. Some of the occupants were wounded, some gassed; some groaned and called out in guttural accents of agony, of fear; some were too far gone to groan. A guard stood at the door.

"Guess they think we're going to murder them!" opined he grimly to the brancardiers as they bore in still another litter.

"We caught quite a bunch to-night between the devil and the deep blue sea," remarked a brancardier jovially. "Now then—steady! One—two—three! Drop the stretcher!" They lifted the silent figure into bed. "This poor devil is almost in. He'll be going West before long. Here's another. Says his name is Max. All right, Max! You're in America now! Nothing but a kid—is he? Can you make out what he's chewing the rag about?"

The guard bent down his head. The German prisoner, young, pale, with still a lingering, childlike softness of contour about the chin, rolled his head ceaselessly to and fro, to and fro, while he muttered in a delirium of pain: "Oh, my poor old mother! Oh, my little sister! The Germans did not want the war!" Over and over again, like a litany.

Up in the pre-operative ward in the château the beds and the floor and the hallway were encumbered

with men on stretchers waiting to be fed into the X-ray room. Here, as down in the admission ward, there was a constant circulation, the gravest cases being rapidly pushed forward and fresh stretchers from the outside filling their places. Suddenly an orderly, who had been bending above a still figure on a cot, straightened himself, and with panic in his face stepped across the room to the nurse.

"That guy in the corner's dying, I think," he muttered in her ear. "Anyhow, he's stopped breathing."

Hastily the nurse sought the alleged moribund's cot, leaned down and felt his pulse. Normal. She held her palm above his nostrils. The man was sound asleep! He was slumbering softly, tranquilly, like a babe in its crib. The orderly, accustomed to the labored, stertorous respirations of those who fight a running fight with death, thought a man must be dying if he did not make a noise!

Stepping carefully along that crowded corridor I bent down to rearrange the blanket of a stretcher case, and ask the soldier how he did.

"I'm all right," he replied quietly. "It's only my foot. I was cleaning my automatic and suddenly it went off accidentally and shot me through the ankle."

At that word "accidentally" a kind of cold chill assailed me. Why had he used that ill-omened word at all? Before now I had heard of the S. I. W.'s—self-inflicted wounds. These were soldiers who,

through cowardice or momentary panic or spite, raging against some real or fancied wrong committed by a superior officer, shot themselves in the hand or foot in order to be sent back to the rear. In any aggregation of humans mounting up to more than a million there are bound to be a few such weaklings. But not this youth with the quiet voice and the clear, candid eyes! A second time he explained the incident, elaborating the details—with painstaking care—and a second time he used that fatal word. My heart was troubled. My head—that cool, hard, alien, dispassionate observer that sits up aloft in us all—whispered that this foolish lad had given the game clean away by the double use of that damning word. But my heart cried out that his story might be true.

Angry at myself, and even more at this savage war, at those monstrous taskmasters, the guns, which put to the same acid test all men, whether strong or weak, I passed the closed doors of the operating room to the deserted veranda and sat down upon the steps. A stray hound, coiled on the lower step, stirred at my coming, thrust its cool muzzle into my lap and licked my hand. And so we sat in mute companionship, the dog and I, and listened to the pounding of the guns. And it seemed to me that night that the dog had the best of it!

Presently a scream—or, to speak more exactly, a yell—pierced the quiet of the house and brought me, startled, to my feet. It was not a cry of terror or of

anguish—nothing at all like that. It was the loud, chesty, rebellious roar of a lusty infant asserting his human rights. But this particular infant was well within the draft limits. Softly I crossed the hall, the dog tagging my footsteps, and opened the door of the operating room. In that brilliantly lighted little theater of healing and pain three tables were occupied, three teams of surgeons were working.

On the table nearest the door a big red-headed young colossus with the chest and huge freckled arms of a Samson, was just going under ether. Or rather, he was not going to do any such thing if he could help himself. At the head of the table, behind him, sat the anæsthetist. With one hand she held the ether cone over his nose while with the other she poured the ether over the cotton. Perhaps the giant had taken fifteen or twenty whiffs—just enough to decide he didn't like the smell and that he was going to be boss of his nose! At the hot-water tap stood the major, soaping his hands for this new case while the nurse tied on a sterile apron.

As I opened the door the young giant, with a swift twist of his head—the only part of him that was free—whirled the offending cone to the floor. It was for all the world like the action of an obstreperous young colt refusing the bridle. The anæsthetist retrieved it, affixed it firmly to his nose and soaked it in ether.

Sounded a muffled roar; "Stop! Stop, I tell yah!

Don't you know how to stop?" More ether. "Stop you!" By this time he was struggling violently. He had taken just enough to be rebellious, and he looked sufficiently strong to rise up and walk off with the table strapped to his back. "I want—I—wanta—wanta——"

"Easy there, old man," counseled the major reassuringly. "Take it easy."

But Redhead did not intend to take it easy or any other way. Another whisk of the head. Off flew the ether cone. This time the major himself picked it up and took the anæsthetist's chair. But before he could readjust the cone the blue eyes in the crimson face beneath opened widely, the giant struggled determinedly and roared in strangled tones:

"I—I—wanta—I wanta s-s-s—I wanta—spit!"

The major chuckled as he lifted the cone. "All right, old man, shoot! Now then—count. One—two—three. Louder! Breathe deep. Four—five—six. That's the stuff! Seven. Keep it up! Loud! Ten——"

The breathing turned into a strong regular snore, and soon the giant had slid fathoms deep into the state of profound unconsciousness. Softly I closed the door.

Some of these men, strong husky youngsters, pulsing with life, hard as nails from their free out-of-door habits, are about as easy to put under ether as would be a wild steer off the range. Every atom of their

physical nature rebels at surrendering consciousness. Others go under like lambs. It is largely a matter of temperament. Once a private laughed as they lifted him upon the table, and catching a whiff of ether he chuckled: "Hi! Give me my gas mask!" Then he cuddled the cone comfortably into place over his nose, settled down to snooze, and took the high dive into complete unconsciousness without a single kick.

The next morning broke into one of those exquisite soft mellow days for which this part of the country, called by the French the heart of France, seems celebrated. It was like a perfect rose, a day when Nature, by her clear sheer beauty, seems to shame man for his deeds of anger and blood. Still the ambulances climbed the hill, a steady stream, and vanished to the rear. At the moment, however, they were carrying more gassed than wounded. And thus the surgeons were snatching a rest. One or two of them appeared in the doorway for a moment, pale, with circles under the eyes and heavy lines from nostril to jaw. When they walked, it was slowly, and I had the impression that they might make it on a dead level, but that they would stumble over a pin.

When the major appeared he proposed a walk to the laundry plant. The change of linen on a thousand to fifteen hundred beds a night during a rush means a well-organized washing system—and this hospital had to depend on the village women. We

strolled through one of the loveliest woods in France, the branches overhead interlacing into Gothic arches of lucid green, while far above, great white billowy clouds, like graceful schooners under full sail, bowled along through the deep uncharted blue of some unknown port. And as we strolled the major spoke of something extraordinary that had occurred the night before.

"It was a queer piece of psychology," he said, "and I don't know that I can get it over to you. It will probably sound unreal, exaggerated, in this calm morning sunshine. But you must try to realize the setting; try to comprehend the tensity, the strain of that operating room. We had been operating for twenty-four solid hours without a break, upon our men. Fine brave fellows, who went on the table without a groan. Men shot to pieces, horribly mangled, done to death. It's heartbreaking work, if one's got any heart to break. At the end of the night we all felt mighty blue. Then they brought in an American captain, a medical officer, already in a moribund condition. Well, to see one of our own corps in that state touched us pretty close. He was blown to pieces. He hadn't a chance, and he knew it. And the sight of his calm, his high fine courage, hit us hard. But we did what we could for him—which was just nothing at all. After that was over I called out: 'Fetch in the boches!'

"And as they brought in the first German wounded

I was aware of a peculiar atmosphere, a sense of strain, a clear antagonism in the room. It was like a live magnetic current. You cannot conceive—nobody can—the terrific night we'd been through trying to salvage our brave fellows. The emotional stress was stupendous. Well, now we were looking on those who had caused that ruin, and the revulsion of feeling ran high. As the anæsthetist fixed the ether cone in place on the Prussian he said to me: 'Sir, would you consider it a crime if I were just to go on pouring ether on this Hun's nose?'

"That brought a laugh and cleared the strained atmosphere. And we cleaned up their wounded exactly as if they had been our own. But I'll not deny we were glad when it was done!"

Returning to the château the major suddenly stopped and inquired: "Have you ever seen any cases of shell shock?"

I had not, though I had heard of them in the French and British armies.

"We don't know exactly what it is yet," continued the major. "Nobody does. But we have a special American hospital for its treatment. Look here: You see those two chaps crouching down by the steps? They both have it—hard."

I looked. I had noted those two hunched figures before, and had taken them for orderlies, dead with fatigue, snatching a few minutes' sleep. Now I looked closer. And looking closer I perceived it was

not fatigue that caused them to squeeze themselves into the smallest possible space; it was not fatigue that caused them to hunch their shoulders and bow their backs as before a storm, draw their heads down into the curved hollow of their chests and try to hide themselves in the ground. It was fear—abject, ghastly, insane fear. They were obsessed, petrified, rendered deaf and dumb—by fear.

The major bent down to one, laid a hand on his shoulder, spoke a friendly word. The man's fixed gaze stared straight through him as if he had been composed of air. He was deaf to reason, deaf to human appeal—but not deaf to the roar of the cannon. For each time that an ambulance rolled by or distant thunder issued from the clouds banking in the western sky his head jerked in the direction of the sound as though pulled by invisible wires. But not one word would he utter. Only his eyes seemed alive, wild, dark, affrighted. For the moment he was not human, but an effigy galvanized by fear. The noise, the continuous shelling, with probably some additional culminating shock, had temporarily bereft him of reason. For both of these men were unwounded, unscathed.

Later, in the admission ward, with the help of an orderly I induced one of these men to eat. The other patients watched with indifference. They had long since become hardened to uglier sights than that of a man crazed in battle. It was like feeding an infant

ostrich. The mouth opened methodically to receive the food, but not one move, not one sound would he make. One hand upheld in air, the index finger raised, marked the tensity of his strained attention. His blue eyes forever darted from side to side. At each distant volley his body trembled and shook. And those straining eyes, full of horror, and that raised index finger followed questing through the air for the sound. It was infinitely pitiful.

"Don't coddle him!" called the major, passing through. "It's the worst thing in world you can do."

"May I see if I can get him to talk?"

"Certainly. But treat him like an ordinary individual."

"He's afraid to talk," said the orderly, pausing by the stretcher. "He's a nut. He thinks if he opens his mouth the Germans will hear him and send over a shell."

In taking his record I discovered his first name was Thomas.

"Why, Thomas," I said, "I've a brother by that name. What do they call you—Tom?" For the first time his eyes fixed themselves on mine. "No, no, don't point up there!" For now his index finger was lifted toward the canvas roof, upon which the first pattering drops of the storm were beginning to fall, and his wide blue eyes were straining after the sound. "It's raining, Tom," I explained. "Rain, rain, rain. You know what rain is! Now put that hand inside."

With the faint, troubled smile of a child he obeyed. But the next instant that listening index finger was upraised again in the air. Resolutely I thrust his hand under the blanket.

"Look at me, Tom. Tom! Look!" He brought his strained gaze down from the roof. "Look round you and see where you are. Do you see those nurses? Do you see these beds? You're in a hospital. You're not fighting now. No shells can get you here. So you've got to buck up and feed yourself. We're all busy here. Take your spoon. Now! Can you find the road to your mouth?"

With another smile, infinitely pathetic, he managed to convey a very wobbly loaded spoon somewhere near the region of his face. The second one found the goal. But it was a prodigious effort. The sweat poured off him. The startled blue eyes lost their fixed glare. Still he had not spoken. When finally he finished the soup and started to haul the blanket up over his head I drew it back and tucked it firmly under his chin. And again those blue eyes smiled! And now for the first time he recognized I was a woman. Before then I had simply been a vague irritant which prevented his proper listening.

With hesitation he pointed to his shirt pocket. This was the first movement, unconnected with his obsession, he had made of his own initiative. Thomas was coming on! I drew forth a small worn black leather Testament and laid it in his hands.

With trembling fingers, for at intervals he still quaked like a leaf, he opened to a photograph—most obviously himself and his young wife. At sight of this girl looking out at him with frank laughing eyes a ray of joy broke across his troubled countenance. He stared hard, his face working—and then he burst into sobs.

“Who is it, Tom? Your brother?”

He shook his head violently and pointed to himself. And now the fugitive smile reappeared.

“Not you!” I exclaimed in hearty surprise.

He nodded, fully absorbed. But still he would not commit himself to speech.

“Then tell me. Say it. Speak!”

He thumped on his chest to indicate it was himself; his face worked; his eyes begged, implored me not to insist, not to drag him forth from his cellule of silence.

“Who is that, Tom?”

He shut his eyes, opened his mouth, and with the sweat starting out on his forehead he pronounced huskily: “Me!”

The sound of his own voice seemed to terrify him utterly, and again he burst into tears.

“And who is this with you, Thomas—your grandmother?”

Again that ray of vivid joy. No need to ask Thomas’ sentiments about his wife! That one look told it all. Again the violent head shake.

"Thomas, it's no use shaking your head at me. You've got to tell me who this lady is!"

And with a tremulous laugh and an effort that brought the tears into his eyes and mine Thomas responded proudly, brokenly: "My wife!"

The ice was broken. In stumbling accents, like a child, Thomas began to talk. And when an hour later he was evacuated back to a base which treats these mental breakdowns it was Thomas himself, from the dark interior of the ambulance where he lay on a stretcher, who called out weakly: "Good-by, miss! Good luck!"

Thus Thomas came back from the land of fear.

Later I went down through the wards searching for the man who had shot himself through the ankle.

"Oh, you mean the S. I. W.?" replied the nurse to my interrogation. "Well, he's keeping pretty quiet this morning. There he is."

"But he's not an S. I. W.," I protested rather faintheartedly. "He told me it was an accident."

"Maybe he did," she retorted with a significant smile.

"Well? Did he confess later?"

"No. Not consciously. But after the operation, while he was coming out from under ether, he gave the whole thing away. He blabbed the entire story before all the men. It seemed he had a grievance against some officer and took this way of getting out from under his command. Somebody," she finished

humorously, "ought to tell those S. I. W.'s that they can't get away with those accidental-on-purpose self-inflicted wounds. Lie as they may, when they're put under ether out plumps the truth. All the ward hears it, and the poor devil, regaining consciousness, wonders why it is that all his comrades turn away their eyes or look him up and down with a cold, contemptuous stare. That chap down there is suffering agonies right now. You see he has pulled up the sheet over his head and is pretending to be asleep."

A word to the wise is sufficient. Those privates who try to take the law into their own hands and change the deal by means of a self-inflicted wound, heed the advice of this friendly nurse—and don't. You can't get away with it. Ether will find your guilty secret out. Fortunately, cases of this type are few and far between.

As the afternoon waned into evening and darkness fell the cannons resumed their bellowing, and the ambulances, which during the day had fallen off, began once more to climb the hill. And this time it was not only gassed that were flowing in but wounded as well. Despite the swiftness and the precision with which the hospital machinery moved the stretchers began to congest, to mass, to lie in the corridors, on the porch, and down on the moon-blanchèd grass. Men shattered and torn to pieces, patient, incomparably brave, with a smile or a joke for the orderlies who worked

among them, lay in the open night under the stars awaiting their turn at the table.

Ah, those dark, silent, blanket-draped figures, lying so still under the moon! Those ghastly pale faces smudged with mud and blood, summoning a smile from their fainting souls as they look up into your eyes! All the papers were glowing with the magnificent deeds of the American heroes. Well, here they were, those heroes, lying before our eyes mangled, torn, bleeding to death with a smile. Somehow in the face of all this the glory and the bombast of those printed eulogies seemed tawdry and cheap.

One of the wounded men on a stretcher called attention to the night. And it was a night worthy of attention. The moon—large, lustrous, flat as an ancient golden plate of Babylon, chased with strange designs—was just appearing over the somber pine woods and drowning the fields and the hospital tents in a glimmering silver mist. But it was not the beauty that the private remarked.

“Fine night for a Hun raid!” he observed grimly; and raising himself with effort on one elbow he stared about him at the hospital tents and the château crowded with helpless men. But if this evacuation hospital was to be bombed—which at the moment I did not believe—it would be an act of sheer wanton brutality, of inhuman reprisal because our troops were winning at Château-Thierry. For on a night of brilliant moonshine like this those blanched tents and

the huge white cross on the grass—insigne of mercy—were visible at a height of ten thousand feet. No, certainly the Germans would not bomb this hospital. They had bombed other hospitals before, it was true, but they would not bomb this one. Why, they had flown over it dozens of times! Thus we all argued.

The early hours of night passed, to the wounded mortally slow, each second packed to its full weight of agony. Down in the wards the cases already operated on were being settled into their cots and, according to how the ether took them, they were laughing, sobbing or reliving the grotesque scenes of the battlefield. No lights here, save the blanched moon rays which filtered in or the occasional gleam of an electric torch directing the movements of the branch-cardiers. On the beaten grassy sod of the tent floor their heavy tread fell noiselessly; their voices were hushed; and one sensed rather than saw many presences in that dark place. Some of the men were asleep; some, too ill to sleep, racked by anguish, by thirst or a mortal restlessness, called feebly for a drink. One there was, lying high on his pillows, passing in pain, who punctuated each gasping respiration with a long-drawn "O-o-o! O-o-o!"

By his side another, obviously coming out of ether, babbled, babbled ceaselessly, in dull drugged tones. A nurse sat by him.

"Say," his voice, weak, dragging, half submerged

in unconsciousness, came out of the dark, "are—are you—my mother?"

"No, boy. Go to sleep."

'Again the submerged, dragging voice: "Don't seem—to have no appetite—for sleeping. . . . Fine appetite—for fighting. . . . No appetite—for sleep. . . . Haven't slept—I don't know when. . . . Shell-ing. Say, they murdered us—in that wood——"

"Sh!" whispered the nurse. "There's a man in the next bed that's pretty bad who's trying to sleep. You wouldn't like to wake him, would you?"

"Sure not!" He caught hold of the soothing hand and held it fast with the instinctive tenacious grip of a drowsy baby. "Worse off than me, is he? . . . I've not got much the matter with—— Oh, God!"—this in a high wrenched voice of clear agony—"what have you done to me? I can't—I can't move!"

"Sh! It's all right. But you mustn't try to move, boy! Lie right still."

"Awright! . . . Say, did you say you was my mother?"

"No."

"I knew you wasn't my mother! But you kind of sound—like her. . . . But she's far away from here—I know that. . . . Can't fool me! . . . I'm in a hospital. Say, are you my sister?"

"No. I'm the nurse. Try to sleep, old top."

"Awright—anything to please a lady. . . . Say, my mother'd hate to see me like this, wouldn't she?"

. . . Say, the folks at home don't know a damn thing about this war—what goes on up here. . . . I'm not going to write to my mother about being here. . . . What's the use? . . . Did you say that guy in the next bed was worse off than me?"

"Yes."

"Is that him making that noise in his throat?"

"Yes. Does it bother you?"

"Hell, no! Say, ask him what his outfit is. . . . Maybe he got his in that wood along with me." Suddenly, before the nurse could thwart him, he sprang to a sitting position and shouted in a strong, clear voice: "Say, are they any fellows here from my outfit?"

"What's your outfit?" came a husky voice from across the aisle.

"Blank machine guns. Battery C."

No reply.

"Wait until morning," soothed the nurse as she eased him gently back again. "Then you can look up your comrades. And don't move quick like that again, sonny. It's bad for you. It might start you to bleeding. Lie still. Try to sleep."

"Don't want to sleep. . . . Any fool can sleep. . . . Say, do you know why they didn't answer when I called out to see if any of my outfit was here? . . . It's because there ain't any of the outfit left but me! . . . The whole blank division's gone—wiped out—shot to hell. They murdered us in that wood——"

"Sh! Sh! There's lots left up there, boy! Don't you fret. They're cleaning the boches right out. We're so proud of you we can't see straight. Now go to sleep. Try. Just a little. Won't you try?"

"Awright! . . . Say, you sound an awful lot like my mother. . . . Can I have a drink? . . . More."

"It'll make you sick, boy. Now lie still . . . still . . . still . . . very . . . ve-ry——"

"Say!"

"Sh!"

"No, but say—I want to say something. . . . Will you write a letter to my captain?"

"Yes, in the morning."

"No—right now. I want you to send it off right now—before they move out."

"All right, old man. What do you want to say?"

"Write this:" The voice was clear and smooth now.

"'DEAR CAPTAIN: I'm so sorry I disappointed you that I can't sleep. I'm trying, but I can't. I'm here in the hospital. They've took off my leg, I think, but I'm not sure yet. But what I wanted to say was this: I gave the orders just as you told me. But the damn cooks ran away. I couldn't much blame them. The Huns would have shot them to hell if they'd stayed. But I gave the orders, exactly as you said. I wanted you to know.'

"That's all."

Still holding the nurse's hand he appeared to drowse. She breathed a sigh of relief, and gently, very gently, sought to disengage herself. Instantly the grip tightened. And the private's voice, quiet, utterly rational, sounded out of the dark:

"Say, you know my captain—he was killed. He was standing just a little way in front of me as I came up to give my report, and a shell busted straight in front of us and tore his whole——"

"Sh! Sh!"

"My captain, he was a fine captain. . . . He—sure was kind—to us—all——"

The voice, weak, dragging, came to a halt, paused, died away. At last the boy slept.

And now the tremulous moaning sigh of the dying man was the only sound in the ward.

"O-o-o! O-o-o! O-o-o!" He was passing fast on his lonely road.

It drew on toward midnight. The moonlight, now at full strength, bathed the tents and the road in a radiant silvery flood. Down behind the wards a grove of somber pines seemed to draw all the darkness of the night into its own heart and leave the surrounding air clear and pale like a halo. One expected to see fairies with lustrous iridescent wings and morning-glory skirts come trooping out from that solemn enchanted wood to dance among the crimson poppies.

On the rear porch of the château the line of waiting stretchers had been moved inside. The stream trickled, man by man, through the X-ray room into the operating theater. There, under a brilliant concentrated light, the surgeons toiled, without ever glancing up, under a tremendous pressure. But they were catching up with the game.

Suddenly, between the moon and the blanched earth, whirled a monstrous black shape. Lower and lower it swooped. And now the air was filled with a terrible vibrating hum. The interrupted drone of twin motors chanted louder and louder. It became an enveloping, stupefying roar. Not continuous, but rhythmical, rising and falling, savage beating waves of sound.

C-r-r—ash! A blinding flash. All creation seemed to go up in the earth-shaking roar of explosion. The air was black with acrid smoke.

C-r-r—ash! Again. A tent, struck squarely, was slit to ribbons. Terror insensate, blind, gripped one by the throat.

"The boches! They're bombing us! They're bombing the hospital!"

Screams, groans, horror indescribable. Men with broken arms and legs threw themselves out of their beds, sought refuge underneath. Wounds broke open. A shell-shock patient sprang from his cot with a crazy yell and ran out into the night. Down, down, he rushed, panting, down into the heart of those black

piners. Another shell-shock case flew to a heap of army blankets in the corner and burrowed out of sight. He fancied he was in a dugout. An orderly who kept his head found time to bend down and tuck his feet in, saying: "Now they won't find you, old sport!"

A high shrill scream. Another. The wounded were being hit again. The dark air was filled with death. Pieces of shrapnel hurtled through the air like knives. The tent walls gaped with holes like a sieve. And still that deafening roar of twin motors, which seemed settling right on their heads. An orderly standing in the moon-blanchèd road scuttled like a rabbit to cover. He flung himself under the wheels of an ambulance. And there his destiny found him. A piece of shrapnel passed through his body. His soul took instant flight.

Up in the operating room the surgeons worked on, their faces the color of chalk. Whang! Whang! Pieces of metal bit into the iron shutters. The windows splintered into a million shards. One flying bit of shell whizzed through the air, less than four feet from Major M—— and lodged in the opposite wall. The orderly fled in blind panic.

"Hi! Go and stand in the corner for a 'dunce!" commanded the major sternly. Turning to his surgeons he said: "Come on, men. We can't let our patients suffer!" and faced back to the table. His cheerful sang-froid stiffened the nerve of them all.

The orderly crawled out from his corner. The nurse handed round tin hats. Silent, they bent to their tasks.

And still overhead the terrific ear-splitting bourdon, the infernal interrupted drone of a machine swooping down to less than three hundred meters in order to make no mistake! C-r-r—ash! Another blind, earth-rocking roar. It was the third bomb. And again it hit the mark. Luckily it was the recreation tent—and nobody was playing just then! Good-by, phonograph. Good-by, comfortable easy-chairs! Screams from the adjoining tent as the whistling missiles flew.

But by now another blessed racket had set up. Crack! Crack! Crack-crack! The antiaircraft guns began to bellow from a dozen concealed points. Sparks of fire burst in the clear upper air. Would the boche plane drop its fourth bomb? One waited in anguished suspense. And now that infernal vibration began to lift; the savage rhythmical whirl sounded less and less fierce, died down, faded away. The French guns had scared the intruder off.

The surgeons straightened backs, which despite themselves had humped beneath the iron hail, drew deep breaths, and smiled at each other with lips that were still a trifle stiff.

“Scared pea green!” admitted one.

“Thought it was going to roost on the rooftop all night.”

"Gee! Some roar!"

Yes, it was over. It had lasted just six minutes! For six eternity-long minutes hell had yawned wide. Then; suddenly as it came, the danger had passed.

Major M——settled his tin hat firmly on his head and, looking like a mandarin in his long white blouse, started forth to estimate the damage and collect the rewounded for operation. Fortunately one of the large tents which had been struck square amidships was empty. Here twisted beds, gutted mattresses, bits of uniforms and tatters of clothes were pasted over the landscape as if a degenerate monster had been at play. In another ward he discovered the patients down on all fours, just clambering out from under cover.

"What's all this? What are you doing under those beds?" demanded the major in mock severity.

An Irishman poked out his head from his refuge, but cautiously, like a tortoise emerging from its shell.

"We were blown here, sir!" he explained solemnly.

The burst of laughter that followed this mendacious sally cleared the atmosphere. With the aid of nurses and orderlies the patients were got back to bed; shattered nerves were soothed by sleeping potions; the rewounded victims carried up to the château; one shell-shock case was retrieved from his dug-out and the other from the wood; the dead orderly was tenderly borne away; the wounded nurse, struck

in the side by flying metal, brought in for operation—and a semblance of peace settled down once more over the hospital.

Up in the operating room Joe, one of the toughest little toughs that the Bowery ever reared, and one of the gamest sports, was being prepared for the table. He was one of the bomb victims. By a perverse freak of fate a second piece of shrapnel had re-entered his old wound. He had been struck twice in exactly the same spot. And as that spot was a sizable hole in his back, and as he had already acquired pneumonia to boot, Joe was staggering under the envious darts and slings of a very adverse circumstance indeed. He had grim need for all of his toughness now!

"Them blanky dash boches," commented Joe weakly to the orderly who was stripping him, "they ain't no slouches when it comes to hittin' de mark. Look at me now. They had two shells wit' my name on, and both of 'em found me out. And I ain't no general, nor yet a colonel—dem big guys is easy to find. What's more, them two shells pinked me twice in de same spot—a double bull's-eye. Can youse beat it? If they got a toid shell wit' my name on it—it's good night, chicken, wit' Joe!"

"If they've got a third shell with your name on it, kiddo, you call an alibi," advised the orderly.

"I'm a-callin' one right now, friend, and don't you fergit it," retorted Joe earnestly. "I ain't takin' no chances wit' dem blanky dash boches!"

They lifted him onto the table.

Outside, the moon, high, pale, tranquil, drenched the dark earth with a silvery flood. The somber pines sucking the blackness from the surrounding air still seemed the abode of enchantment. It appeared incredible that a short half hour ago this quiet landscape had witnessed such an atrocious deed. The raid had been an act of wanton, inhuman brutality. In honest, open warfare the Americans were winning at Château-Thierry, and in revenge the Huns had wreaked their rage on helpless wounded men. It was a futile, insane act.

Nor did it achieve its end—to terrorize the enemy. On the contrary, that enemy, with a white flame of wrath burning high in its heart, kept steadfastly on with its appointed work. The surgeons, the nurses, the orderlies, the drivers—redoubled their vigilant care. The ambulances continued to rumble in, a steady stream. From their dark interiors stretchers were lifted gently out and deposited on the grass. Again it was a wave of gassed. Among them moved orderlies and nurses with food and soothing lotions for the burns. When the tents were filled the lighter cases lay out on their blankets under the moon. It was like a vast gypsy encampment. The men leaned on their elbows, drank hot coffee and talked of horrible, grotesque, fantastic and sanguinary things in low, level, dispassionate tones as if they were discussing the weather.

Up there the battle still raged with a ferocious violence unconceived of in far-away safe America. Overhead the sullen German cannon still boomed and boomed and boomed.

And still the Americans advanced—advanced—advanced!

THE END



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